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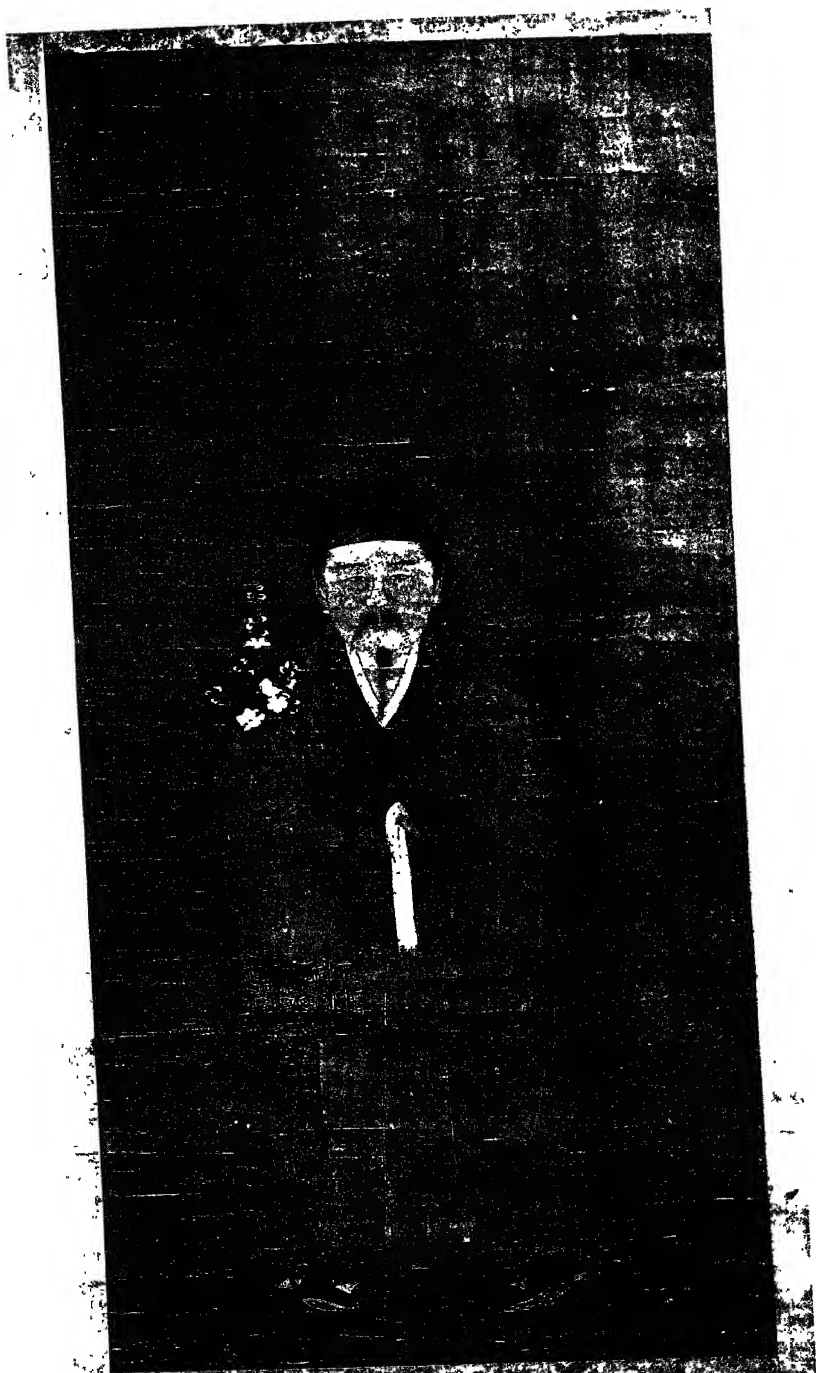
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# PAINTING IN THE FAR EAST











FRONTISPIECE  
PORTRAIT OF SUGAWARA MICHIZANE

TRADITIONALLY ATTRIBUTED TO KANAOKA

*Arthur Morrison Collection*

Perhaps a very early copy by Takuma Tameuji

# PAINTING IN THE FAR EAST

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HIS-  
TORY OF PICTORIAL ART IN ASIA  
ESPECIALLY CHINA AND JAPAN  
BY LAURENCE BINYON

LONDON  
EDWARD ARNOLD

1908



## PREFACE

**S**INCE in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the art of Japan began to captivate the Western world, collectors and students have gradually come to understand that the colour-prints, the lacquer, and the small ivories which were the first revelation of that art to Europe are, in fact, but subordinate manifestations of a great pictorial tradition. And the more the painting of Japan is studied, the more one is brought to realise its intimate relation with the painting of China; and that, again, can never be rightly understood without some knowledge of the successive waves of religious impulse and idea which have their origin in India. This unity of Asia is the main thesis of Mr. Kakuzo Okakura's "Ideals of the East," a little book which aimed at tracing the varying phases of the Asian ideal as it is shown in art. The English or American reader starts, unfortunately, with almost complete ignorance of Mr. Okakura's subject; and his book, stimulating as it is, is so full of condensed learning and brief allusion to unfamiliar names that it has bewildered many as much as it enlightened them. When the main outlines of the subject are better known, his



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book will be returned to with enhanced appreciation.

The present volume attempts to cover much of the same ground, but is confined to pictorial art, and only approaches the underlying world of thought and philosophy through the tangible evidence of existing pictures.

In recent years the material for study of this subject has been enormously increased through the magnificent reproductions published in Japan. Chief among these are the magazine called the *Kokka*, which was started in 1889, but only of recent years has appeared in an English edition with English text; and the "Select Relics of Japanese Art," admirably edited, with text in both Japanese and English, by Mr. S. Tajima. This last is to be completed in twenty volumes. In these publications are reproductions from paintings, both Chinese and Japanese, which are preserved in temples and in private collections, unseen by any traveller. Had it not been for these materials now accessible, the present volume would never have been attempted. Reproductions, of course, even reproductions made with such exquisite skill and taste as these, are not the same as original pictures. No one could venture on the nice discriminations of the connoisseur without study of the originals; no one fully comprehends what Oriental painting really is without such study. But we must face

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the situation. The art of Eastern Asia is assuredly worth serious study, and the world every day is coming to recognise this more fully. Yet the majority of us have not the opportunity to visit Japan and China, and even to the eager inquirer who has this opportunity much of the best will remain hidden. We must therefore be content, most of us, to learn of the masterpieces of this art chiefly through the splendid publications which I have mentioned, supplemented by the collections available in the West. In the following pages I have referred to paintings in the British Museum wherever possible, and also to masterpieces reproduced in the *Kokka* and the "Select Relics," both of which publications are quite indispensable to the student.

Till the public is better acquainted with the general outlines of the art of Eastern Asia it is of little use to discuss in detail the work of individual artists. At present the public has nothing but a few general misconceptions for a basis of study. Hitherto there has been no work giving this main outline of the whole theme. We have heard rumours of a comprehensive volume by Professor Fenollosa, whose wide, intimate, and first-hand knowledge has given him a great reputation; but unfortunately the promised work has not yet appeared. Mr. Okakura's little book covers the whole ground, it is true, but is concerned primarily,

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not with art, but with ideas, and is, moreover, written from the standpoint of a Japanese. I hope that meanwhile this volume, in spite of all the deficiencies occasioned by limited opportunities, may not be thought too presumptuous an attempt to survey the achievement and to interpret the aims of Oriental painting, and to appreciate it from the standpoint of a European in relation to the rest of the world's art. It is the general student and lover of painting whom I have wished to interest. My chief concern has been, not to discuss questions of authorship or of archæology, but to inquire what æsthetic value and significance these Eastern paintings possess for us in the West. Therefore in each period I have chosen a few typical masters who concentrate in their work the predominant ideals of their time, rather than bewilder the reader with lists of unfamiliar names. In the notes to the several chapters at the end of the book I have supplemented the names mentioned in the text with a few others, adding references to the reproductions of some of their most important works, and also to a certain number of representative original paintings in the British Museum. These last are selected from the extensive Museum collection, and in no case form a complete list.

Of Chinese painting so vast an amount has been destroyed by time, fire, wars, rebellions, and the armed ravages of Western civilisation, that very  
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few specimens of its finest periods exist. Those who wish to know more about the multitude of famous artists who flourished in China from the third to the fifteenth century (after which available examples begin to be more numerous) must consult Professor Giles's "Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art" (Shanghai, 1905), supplemented by Professor Hirth's "Scraps from a Collector's Note-book" (Leiden, 1905). The following pages owe much to these works, which have for the first time made accessible to English readers much of the voluminous material existing in Chinese on the history and criticism of art. The chapters on Japanese painting are equally indebted to the work published in 1900 in French by a Government commission of Japanese experts under the title "Histoire de l'Art du Japon"; to various notices in the *Kokka* and in Mr. Tajima's publications; to Mr. Arthur Morrison's articles on "The Painters of Japan" in the *Monthly Review* (1902); to Captain Brinkley's great work on Japan; and to Mr. Okakura's "Ideals of the East," already mentioned. For actual study of the paintings I had an invaluable helper towards appreciation of the spirit and character of Japanese and Chinese art in Mr. Rionin Kohitsu, from whom in personal intercourse I learnt much which books could never teach. Mr. Kohitsu grudged nothing from his marvellous store of learning and his exquisite connoisseurship,

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based on familiar knowledge of the masterpieces of his country's art and on his family's inherited traditions.

A word as to the illustrations. These have been rather severely limited in number. Many more might have been given to illustrate the later chapters of the book; but to do this would have given a disproportionate effect, since of the early painting so little is available. Again, it must be remembered that very few of these pictures can be reproduced by processes current in Europe so as to convey anything like an adequate idea of their real beauty. I have tried, therefore, to make up for the comparatively small number of the illustrations by choosing these with as much care as possible, so as to make them as representative as I could. The difficulties of choice were very great, so many pictures yielding no satisfactory result to photography except by processes which would have made the book prohibitively expensive. I have to thank Mr. Donald Macbeth for the exceptional pains he has taken in photographing the pictures and in preparing the collotypes.

About half of the illustrations are from the British Museum collection, which since the publication of Dr. Anderson's catalogue has been enriched by some important additions. For the rest I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Morrison, Mr. George Veitch, and Mr. J. Martin White, in

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England; of Mr. Freer and the Trustees of the Boston Museum, in America; of the Editor of the *Kokka* and Mr. Tajima, in Japan. To M. Emile Hovelague, M. Gonse, M. Migeon, and M. Petrucci I am indebted for friendly assistance in various ways; and especially to Mr. Morrison, whose knowledge and counsel have long aided my studies. I have also to thank for valuable help my colleague, Mr. Lionel Giles, in correcting proof-sheets, and my wife, in preparing the index.

L. B.

*October 1908.*



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## CHAPTER I. THE ART OF THE EAST AND THE ART OF THE WEST

**I**N the great mystical poem of Persia, the "Masnavi," it is told how the Greeks and the Chinese disputed as to which were the better artists. Their dispute was brought before the Sultan; a contest was arranged, and a house allotted to each party for them to embellish in their own way. The poet tells how the Chinese covered the walls of their house with paintings, while the Greeks contented themselves with cleaning theirs till the walls shone bright and clear as the heavens. The work of the Chinese was greatly admired, but it was the Greeks who were adjudged the prize.

This story is told merely by way of illustration, and is put to symbolic use by the poet. It would be rash to treat it as historic relation. Yet doubtless it reflects some truth of tradition. At any rate it embodies a traditional antithesis between the art of the East and the West.

In what precisely does this antithesis exist? Does the Persian poet's allusion emphasise, as we might perhaps infer, a reliance of the East on colour, a reliance of the West on form? Such an interpretation would commend itself probably to general acceptance in this country. This thesis

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has, in fact, been recently promulgated by a thoughtful writer in an interesting and ingenious essay.\* In seeking to form a conclusion on such a subject, we cannot do better than follow Aristotle's method, and start by examining some theory already in the field. And as this theory accords with popularly received impressions, we shall do well to see what support it really has from facts.

"The two main ideas" (writes the critic in question) "with which all art is concerned seem to have been separately contributed, one by the West, the other by the East. Form is chiefly a matter of the intellect. The arts which deal with form convey ideas. Their appeal is to the mind. Colour, on the other hand, conveys no ideas. It is emotional, and appeals to the senses rather than the intellect. And this being so, it seems natural that the Western temperament, intellectual rather than sensuous, should excel in form rather than colour; while the Eastern, sensuous rather than intellectual, should excel in colour rather than form."

There is more than one point in these too absolute statements which challenge discussion and criticism. But let us first follow our author in the development of his theory.

After characterising Oriental colour as something different from Western colour, as distinguished by a note of "swarthy and deep half-melancholy rich-

\* "Byzantine Architecture." *Edinburgh Review*, October 1904.

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ness," he goes on to say that in the Eastern conception of colour there is "that union of strength and simplicity which reveals itself only when a nation is dealing with the things which it understands and which correspond to its own genius. To match the Eastern sense for colour we must have recourse to the Western sense for form." And the West is weak, trivial, and uncertain in colour, as the East is unstable, eccentric, and capricious in form.

But more: "Though the idea of colour is indigenous to the East, yet of an adequate expression of that idea, of its embodiment in any great work or school of art, the East has never been capable. . . . Diffused throughout the life of the East as this sense for colour is, we look in vain for any great artistic manifestation, any school of painting or architectural style of Eastern origin and growth, which shall centralise and collect that sense for colour for us. The impotence that saps the emotional temperament has waited on the East." According to this writer, it was the Byzantine Greeks who were called upon to effect a manifestation of the Oriental ideal of colour, an ideal which the Oriental races had been too feeble-willed to do more than trivially illustrate in minor arts and crafts.

All this is as plausible at first sight as it is interesting. But now we must ask, On what

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evidence is this theory based? The writer has many and definite illustrations to draw from in the field of Western art, but his illustrations from the East are fragmentary and vague. Have the Oriental races really been so impotent and uncreative? Do the vague associations of luxury and sensuous magnificence which the "gorgeous East" brings into our minds really represent all that is to be known of it? Is there nothing besides carpets and embroideries, lustrous wares and richly ornamented metal-work, familiar to our eyes in our shops, as Aladdin's trays of rubies and the glowing furniture and background of the "Arabian Nights," together with a hundred phrases from the poets, are familiarly impressed on our imagination, with the same vague and sumptuous effect? If so, then we must indeed say that art in the East has never emerged from the barbaric stage, the stage in which decoration precedes design, and in which the sense for beauty remains childish, fascinated by colour and movement, unable to grasp organic relations, incapable of coherent and articulate production.

We say "the East," with how huge a generalisation! Most Englishmen, if they ask themselves what materials their minds have collected to furnish and fill out this broad idea, will think above all of India. And if they pursue the question into a special field of art, reminiscences of travel or of reading will recall images of architecture that are,

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at least to our eyes, inexpressive and fantastic, together with, it may be, some scattered specimens of Persian miniature painting or Japanese colour prints, and for the rest mere craftsman's work, textiles, and *bric-à-brac*.

Whatever be the merits of Oriental architecture, one may say at once that it is not in this art that the genius of Asia has found its supreme expression. There is a reason for this, which we shall revert to later.

Let us take pictorial art: Persian paintings, Japanese prints and drawings, what have these in common? Are they sporadic outbursts, one on the western the other on the eastern verge of the vast continent? Or are they both related to an older and more central art?

The latter answer is the right one. It is in China that the central tradition of Asian painting must be sought for. Of all the nations of the East, the Chinese is that which through all its history has shown the strongest æsthetic instinct, the fullest and richest imagination. And painting is the art in which that instinct and that imagination have found their highest and most complete expression. If we are to compare the art of the East and the art of the West, in their essential character and differences, we must take as our type of the former the pictorial art of China.

But why not of Japan? many will ask. ' For it is



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generally believed that in art the Japanese have enormously improved on what they have derived from China. Certainly they have added new elements, and in some particular respects have surpassed the older nation, though in other respects they have never attained the same level. So vast an amount of Chinese painting has been lost or destroyed that we have no means for any detailed comparison. Yet even what little remains vindicates its great claim. The Japanese look to China as we look to Italy and Greece : for them it is the classic land, the source from which their art has drawn not only methods, materials, and principles of design, but an endless variety of theme and motive. As in the late nineteenth century Japan has taken over the material civilisation of Europe, so, more than a thousand years earlier, she took over and absorbed the civilisation of China, its art, its religion, its thought. But it was not foundation and starting-point alone that Chinese art supplied, but a pattern and ideal. Again and again the painters of Japan have renewed their art with fresh life and inspiration from the vigorous schools of the continent. The first great school of painting in Japan derived entirely from the grand and forcible style of the masters of the T'ang dynasty. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries a school arose which developed a native character in its design, and enrolled in its ranks a number of splendid draughtsmen and

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gorgeous colourists. When this school decayed, it was again from China that the renaissance came, the great renaissance of the fifteenth century which established the three classic schools of painting in Japan, and gloried in infinite variations on themes already handled with consummate feeling and expression by the galaxy of artists who flourished under the Emperors of the House of Sung. The next phase in Japanese painting was inaugurated by emulation of the rich and decorative colouring of the earlier Ming epoch ; and once more, in the eighteenth century, a last wave from the now declining art of China left its traces on impressible Japan.

The painting of the two countries, therefore, represents one great and continuous tradition, a tradition maintained and made illustrious by countless artists for two thousand years. From China that tradition, with its principles and ideals, originates ; not only Japan in the East, but Persia in the West, has derived the sources of its art from the fertilising overflow of that wonderful nation whose history has been the continued absorption from without of barbarous neighbours and invaders, and the imposition on its conquerors of its own civilisation.

The general conception of Chinese art which prevails in Europe is entirely founded on the productions of its decadence. Even in the case of the

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porcelain, it is the later kinds that are collected and prized: the simpler and grander forms of the earlier periods are scarcely known. In the case of painting, the real nature of the art is absolutely unguessed at by any save a very few students. The bastard and comparatively worthless productions made now for two centuries for the European market in Canton represent for most of the general public who have formed any idea at all on the subject the pictorial art of the Empire; and they associate that art with bright, if harmonious, colours, a tame and flaccid sense of form, and the monotonous repetition of effete conventions.

But if we take the central tradition of Asian painting in its great periods and most typical form of expression, what do we find? We find a type of painting in which colour, so far from being predominant, is an always subordinate element, and is often entirely absent.

The painting of Asia is throughout its main tradition an art of line. The Chinese of the twelfth century, the Japanese of the fifteenth, evolved an art of tone, but in both cases eliminated colour.

A Chinese critic of the sixth century, who was also an artist, published a theory of æsthetic principles which became a classic and received universal acceptance, expressing, as it did, the deeply rooted instincts of the race. In this theory it is Rhythm that holds the paramount

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place; not, be it observed, imitation of Nature, or fidelity to Nature, which the general instinct of the Western races makes the root-concern of art.

In this theory every work of art is thought of as an incarnation of the genius of rhythm, manifesting the living spirit of things with a clearer beauty and intenser power than the gross impediments of complex matter allow to be transmitted to our senses in the visible world around us. A picture is conceived as a sort of apparition from a more real world of essential life.

Every one knows the story of the grapes of Zeuxis which appeared so like real grapes that birds came to peck at their tempting clusters. The Chinese have parallel fables about famous masterpieces, but how different an order of ideas they attest! A great artist painted a dragon upon a temple wall, and as he put the final touch to it, the dragon, too instinct with life, soared crashing through the roof and left an empty space. The inner and informing spirit, not the outward semblance, is for all painters of the Asian tradition the object of art, the aim with which they wrestle.

Let us take an example, a Chinese painting of the thirteenth century. The subject is "The Moon over Raging Waves." Doubtless to the Chinese mind the theme had its symbolic side; the peace of the radiant soul above the fluctuating tumult of the passions is perhaps the parallel suggested;

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but we need no more for enjoyment than the inherent poetry of the contrast. The picture presents us with a vision of the sea, a waste of waves curling over into foam, pale under the brightness of the full moon. And the waves are represented by lines which, if they neglect the accidental edges and broken forms of rough water as we see it, emphasise the continuous curve and rhythm by which waves are actually created. Another treatment of this subject—traditional, like so many of the subjects of Asian art—shows the golden moon appearing over the shoulder of a shadowy promontory, and at its base a single wave flung up out of darkness into the moonlight. The same treatment of water persists throughout this art, from the earliest examples we know down to Okio and Hokusai in Japan. It is always the essential character and genius of the element that is sought for and insisted on : the weight and mass of water falling, the sinuous, swift curves of a stream evading obstacles in its way, the burst of foam against a rock, the toppling crest of a slowly arching billow ; and all in a rhythm of pure lines. But the same principles, the same treatment, are applied to all subjects. If it be a hermit sage in his mountain retreat, the artist's efforts will be concentrated on the expression, not only in the sage's features, but in his whole form, of the rapt intensity of contemplation ; towards this effect

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every line of drapery and of surrounding rock or tree will conspire, by force of repetition or of contrast. If it be a warrior in action, the artist will ensure that we shall feel the tension of nerve, the heat of blood in the muscles, the watchfulness of the eye, the fury of determination. That birds shall be seen to be, above all things, winged creatures rejoicing in their flight ; that flowers shall be, above all things, sensitive blossoms unfolding on pliant, up-growing stems ; that the tiger shall be an embodied force, boundless in capacity for spring and fury—this is the ceaseless aim of these artists, from which no splendour of colour, no richness of texture, no accident of shape diverts them. The more to concentrate on this seizure of the inherent life in what they draw, they will obliterate or ignore at will half or all of the surrounding objects with which the Western painter feels bound to fill his background. By isolation and the mere use of empty space they will give to a clump of narcissus by a rock, or a solitary quail, or a mallow plant quivering in the wind, a sense of grandeur and a hint of the infinity of life.

Who shall say of such an art that it is not mature, still less that it is impotent to express ideas ? In its coherence and its concentration, in its resolute hold on the idea of organic beauty, this tradition, so old in the East, manifests the character of an art that has reached complete development.

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This painting, we have said, is an art of line rather than an art of colour. Yet it is not difficult to see how an art of line can come to have for one of its chief characteristics, and for its most obvious attraction, the charm of colour. The Japanese prints of the eighteenth century, for instance, proved a revelation of exquisite colour to Europeans; and yet they too are in their essence linear designs. The reason is that these linear designs aim at no illusion of relief, and ignore cast shadows. The spaces to be coloured are flat spaces, and the instinct of the artist is to invent a harmony of colours which intensifies and gives added charm to the harmony of line. Such an art never loses sight of the primary condition of a picture as a decoration on a flat wall; and with this decorative aim the free and undistracted development of colour-harmonies is naturally associated. It is when a new and absorbing interest is added to pictorial art, when the artist attempts to produce the likeness of figures and objects as they appear in relief, and begins to use light and shade as a means to this end, that his mind is distracted from the pursuit of harmony in line and colour; these become secondary aims, and as a natural consequence the sense for colour becomes weak and uncertain. Why is it that in Italian painting before the Renaissance, even where no decided genius for colour is shown, the colour of quite

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minor, insignificant, and provincial masters pleases us? It is because the painting of those early periods was as yet unconfused and undistracted by the problems of chiaroscuro. European painting, however, was soon committed to the portrayal of relief and the ideal of complete realisation. In the North this was inevitable because of the powerful instinct towards realism innate in the races of the Netherlands, the early flowering of whose genius directed the aims of painting. In Italy it was equally inevitable, because of the intellectual passion for science which was inseparable from the genius of Florence; and it is from the great Florentine school that Europe inherits its main tradition of design for all ideal subjects. Scientific curiosity has, ever since the Renaissance, played a potent part in the history of European art. In painters like Paolo Uccello we find the struggle to master perspective overshadowing the purely artistic quest for beauty, just as in our own time an intense interest in scientific discoveries about the nature of light has led a whole school of landscape painters to sacrifice fundamental qualities of design in a passionate endeavour to realise on canvas the vibration of sunlight.

Science must of course play a part in the production of all mature painting. The artist in his desire to discover beauty is confronted with difficult problems which he must acquire the science to



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solve ; but it is as a means to an end, and only as a means. It is the besetting vice of our Western life as a whole, so complex and entangled in materials, that we do not see things clearly ; we are always mixing issues and confounding ends with means. We are so immersed in getting the means for enjoying life that we quite forget how to enjoy it, and what is called success is, oftener than not, defeat. So, too, in current criticism of painting, we find it commonly assumed that an advance in science is of itself an advance in art ; as if correct anatomy, a thorough knowledge of perspective, or a stringent application of optical laws were of the slightest value to art except as aids to the effective realisation of an imaginative idea.

The scientific aim which has warped and weakened certain phases of modern painting in Europe is a symptom of Western tendencies in extreme. The East has also sometimes carried its tendencies to extreme ; we find the expression of them in what is known as the Literary Man's Painting of China and Japan, a kind of art which has as little reference as possible to external fact and relies entirely on vague suggestions of poetic mood.

But, ignoring these extreme expressions, let us regard rather the sum of classic painting in Asia and in Europe.

The main arresting difference is, as we have seen,

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that the painting of Europe does not limit itself; it is not content till it has mastered every possible means of communicating ideas through the representation of the visible world: it emulates the effects of sculpture, in order to communicate the emotions which alone can be produced by figures seen in roundness and relief; it emulates the effects of architecture, in order to communicate the emotions that only ordered spaces and perspective can evoke. And it wants to produce all these effects at once, as well as the effects of harmonious line and colour.

The painting of Asia, on the other hand, limits itself severely. It leaves to sculpture and to architecture the effects proper to those arts. But it has not remained merely decorative, as so many people assume; it is in its own way fully as mature as our own.

The great painters of either continent have pursued the same end. They have sought to communicate life-giving ideas of beauty in a sensuous embodiment. The means employed have been different, yet not so different as would appear at first sight. Limited to line, the painters of Asia have concentrated centuries of study on the effort to make that line intimately expressive of form; and with mere contour they succeed in producing the illusion of perfect modelling. The very ease with which relief can be represented by shadows,

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as with us, has taken away from our painters the necessity for this concentration and weakened their sense for expressive line. The painters of the East have succeeded in giving life to their figures; and that the figures in a picture should impress us as real, breathing, laughing, sorrowing humanity, this is the essential thing we demand. Absolute anatomical correctness, which pedants demand, detracts from this impression, and is no more present in the great painting of Europe than in the great painting of Asia. The fact is, we are so used to our own set of conventions that we forget how large a part they play even in the most realistic pictures, and when confronted, in the art of Asia, with a different set of conventions, we are apt to fix our attention entirely on them, instead of allowing ourselves to receive the suggestions of reality which these are intended to produce. So it is often said that there is no perspective in Chinese and Japanese painting. M. Raphael Petrucci, in a most illuminating, comprehensive, and masterly essay,\* has entirely exploded this fallacy. He has conclusively shown that the mastery of perspective in Eastern painting is quite comparable to that of European painting, only it is different in the conventions it allows; it has been naturally evolved

\* "Les Caractéristiques de la Peinture Japonaise." Par R. Petrucci. *Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles*, Janvier-Février, 1907.

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out of the past history of art in Asia, whereas in Europe its problems were approached in the fifteenth century from an abstract point of view, as geometry, in a conscious effort to recover effects known to have been achieved by the Greek painters. As we shall see, Chinese painters of the eighth century and the twelfth century, among many others, have left treatises on the means of representing in a picture the appearances of the relative distances of objects in space. But M. Petrucci has also shown that in European painting, even in masterpieces of artists like Leonardo and Ingres, the laws of perspective are boldly violated in obedience to æsthetic necessities, although we are entirely persuaded of the reality of the effect produced, and the violation is only perceived when we resolutely discard the artistic impression and make a patient scrutiny from the point of view of science alone. He reminds us, too, how easily Hokusai was able to assimilate European perspective, learnt from the Dutch at Nagasaki, to the perspective of the Japanese.

Readers of Goethe's "Conversations" will remember his striking comment on a landscape by Rubens. He showed an engraving after this picture to the ingenuous Eckermann, and asked him to say what he noticed in it. After minutely describing every detail, Eckermann at last saw what he was intended to see, that the figures in

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the picture cast their shadows one way and the trees another. Light, in fact, was introduced from two different sides, in a manner "quite contrary to Nature." "That is the point," said Goethe. "It is by this that Rubens proves himself great, and shows to the world that he with a free spirit stands above Nature and treats her conformably with his high purposes." Admitting that the expedient was somewhat violent, still Goethe praises "the bold stroke of the master, by which in a genial manner he proclaims to the world that art is not entirely subject to natural necessities, but has laws of its own." "The artist," he continues, "has a two-fold relation to Nature; he is at once her master and her slave. He is her slave, inasmuch as he must work with earthly things in order to be understood; but he is her master, inasmuch as he subjects these earthly means to his high intentions."

Goethe's mind, so magnificently free from prejudice, at once sheds the light of truth upon the subject. The laws of science are not the laws of art. Yet so permeated are our ways of thought (how much more so since Goethe's day!) by scientific conceptions, that to many this criticism of his will seem a startling paradox and a dangerous heresy. On the contrary, the danger and the heresy are with those who import scientific views into judgments on art. Few of us probably realise how strong

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this influence is ; to what a degree, in the public, it prevents a free judgment of painting, and how tyrannical a claim it makes upon the painter of to-day.

Here is one thing we can learn from the study of Oriental painting. We can learn to distrust this tendency, absorbed from an age of triumphant science, to set up an external objective standard, asking of a picture whether it correctly represents the objects it portrays, instead of asking to what service the materials have been used, and whether it is a real experience to our souls. Our art, like our civilisation, too often defeats its own end ; in the thirst for reality it falls into indiscriminate acceptance, and loses or obscures essentials. The art and the life of the East stand, with far more constancy, for a finely valuing choice.

We may now turn back for a moment to re-examine the theory with which we started. The notion that the idea of form is the great contribution of the West to art, and the idea of colour the great contribution of the East, is, we can now see, founded on entirely inadequate evidence, and even if true would not touch the essential question. There is indeed an unreality in the antithesis. What is meant by the idea of colour and the idea of form ? The phrases have no meaning except in so far as the idea of harmony or rhythm underlies both. Nor can the intellectual appeal in art be divorced from the

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sensuous or emotional appeal. Great art only begins when all these are absorbed and unified in one complete yet single satisfaction. It is a proof of the profound ignorance prevailing in the West of Asiatic art that so earnest and thoughtful a student as the critic I have quoted should totally ignore the painting of China and Japan. In that painting the Oriental sense for colour is assuredly "collected and centralised" to magnificent effect. Yet I do not believe that the sense of colour is peculiar to the East, and that the West has only a "taste" for colour, without instinctive sense. Remember how easily even the Oriental sense for colour, strengthened by ages of tradition, can be corrupted by the introduction of cheap pigments invented by the chemists of Europe. Nowhere is there lovelier colour than in the Japanese prints of the fine period in the eighteenth century; nowhere is there viler or more hideous colour than in those same prints when invaded by the aniline pigments of the West. In Europe also the multiplication of pigments by chemistry has further weakened a colour sense already enfeebled or obscured among painters by scientific aims imported into art; just as our sense for form has been vitiated and degraded by the commercial manufactures of machinery. I incline to believe that in the life of mediæval Europe the sense for colour played as strong

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a part as it is still claimed to play in Oriental life.

Both in this and in other respects, if we take a comprehensive view of the pictorial art of both continents, the differences which arrest at first sight tend to lessen or disappear on closer scrutiny. The critic I have quoted was misled, I think, by concentrating his attention on architecture rather than on painting. With Oriental architecture this book is not directly concerned. Yet all art is one, and I do not wish to ignore conclusions that such a study might provoke. We find that painting in the East has carefully eschewed all emphasis on the solidity of materials ; it ever tends to absorb object in idea : it is natural, therefore, that we should not expect the Asian spirit to find congenial expression in such an architecture as our own. I write with diffidence on the subject, but so far as I understand the architecture of Japan, for instance, I would say that it was conceived in a different spirit from our own ; that a building was regarded less in itself than as a fusion of man's handiwork into Nature, the whole surroundings of the scene making part, and perhaps the chief part, of the architect's conception. And here we touch what is certainly a very real and animating principle in the pictorial art of the East, and come at last on a more essential difference between the art of the East and the West.



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The ideas of Buddhism saturate the art of China and Japan. To the Buddhist this world is transitory, vile and miserable; the flesh is a burden, desire an evil, personality a prison.\* And all through the classic art of these countries, though these conceptions have been turned to gracious and sweet uses in the life of human intercourse, and though the old Adam of humanity breaks forth from time to time in celebration of war, adventure, and the deeds of heroes, yet the Indian ideal claims everywhere its votaries, and the chosen and recurrent theme is the beauty of contemplation, not of action. Not the glory of the naked human form, to Western art the noblest and most expressive of symbols; not the proud and conscious assertion of human personality; but, instead of these, all thoughts that lead us out from ourselves into the universal life, hints of the infinite, whispers from secret sources—mountains, waters, mists, flowering trees, whatever tells of powers and presences mightier than ourselves: these are the themes dwelt upon, cherished, and preferred.

The Italian Renaissance, and all the art deriving from its inspiration, represents the glorification of man. Only lately have we begun to feel dissatisfied with the ideas embodied in that movement and its splendid productions; to become conscious that

\* The lack of personal pronouns in the Chinese and Japanese languages is significant of mental attitude.

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Europe has lost something which we desire to recover from those times which in the great Gothic cathedrals had power to transmute materials, even the most solid and massive, into ideas and aspirations. Setting out to conquer the material world, to master its secrets and harness its energies to our uses, we have given our devotion to science ; but in the end science has humbled us. In the nineteenth century we in Europe came to apprehend more justly the true place of man in the world, and the art of our time arrives at just such a conception as the art of China had expressed, with perhaps even more truly modern feeling, a thousand years ago. I hope to make this plain when we come in the course of our survey to the painting of the Sung period, and can consider its productions in more detail.

It is in landscape, and the themes allied to landscape, that the art of the East is superior to our own. The power of the art of the West excels in the human drama.

The Western spirit is full of an overpowering sense of the sublime capacities of mankind.

“What a piece of work is a man ! how noble in reason ! how infinite in faculty ! in form and moving how express and admirable ! in action how like an angel ! in apprehension how like a god ! the beauty of the world ! the paragon of animals !”

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Yet it is inevitable that to this spirit the hour of discouragement and dismay should bring, with a sharpness unknown to the Oriental temper and the detached Oriental mind, the desolation of the sentence of mortality:

“And yet what to me is this quintessence of dust !”

The high Renaissance pride and glow are apt to leave this bitter taste in the end. Absorption in man as the centre of the world and hero of existence leads certainly to loss of that sanity and sweetness which an openness to the abiding presences of the non-human living world around us infuses into life, and which are so abundant and refreshing in the art we are about to consider. It is not by that absorption that we shall find the full meaning or animating power of our Western faith that in man the divinity is revealed.

I have sometimes thought that if our modern painting had developed continuously from the art of the Middle Ages, without the invasion of scientific conceptions which the Renaissance brought about, its course would appear to have run on very similar lines to that of the painting of the East, where the early religious art, so like in aim to that of the early Italian frescoes, flowered gradually into naturalism, always pervaded by a perfume of religious idealism. As it is, the painting of Europe is richer, more complex, it has added powers and

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new resources ; its contrast with Eastern art is like that of dramatic poetry with lyric poetry ; more matter has been taken in hand, more difficulties attempted. The limitations of Eastern tradition keep its art pure and make even the productions of insignificant artists a pleasure to look upon. In our more burdened and more troubled art failure is far more frequent, though to its greatest triumphs attaches, it may be, a greater glory.

## CHAPTER II. EARLY ART TRADITIONS IN ASIA

**I**N the winter of 1895-96, Dr. Sven Hedin, travelling across Central Asia, passed in the district of Khotan the mounded remains of deserted cities, covered up with drifts of sand. Khotan is in Chinese Turkestan. It was a small kingdom, paying tribute to China, lying to the north and somewhat to the east of Kashmir.

Already there had filtered through to India objects claimed to have been found in the ruined cities of Khotan ; and now the information brought by Sven Hedin suggested that the sites which he had noticed should prove a favourable starting-point for systematic excavation. The Indian Government has sent out three successive expeditions under Dr. Aurel Stein, the third of which is now busy continuing the work of exploration. The results of the first two missions have been published by Dr. Stein in two books, one in 1903, the other in 1907.

The cities of Khotan were abandoned about the eighth century A.D. The sand encroaching in waves from the great desert had made them no longer habitable. It was not, as with Pompeii and Herculaneum, a sudden calamity arresting a people in its daily life ;

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what the people of Khotan valued they took away with them ; yet what was left is interesting enough. And the dry sand of the desert has preserved it all with perfect freshness for more than a thousand years.

What then do we find in this little, remote kingdom in the heart of Asia? We find sculpture and paintings ; we find heaps of letters on tablets of wood ; odds and ends of woven stuffs and furniture ; and police notices on strips of bamboo. The police notices—couched in just such terms as we use to-day, “Wanted, a man with a grizzled moustache,” &c. &c.—the police notices are in Chinese. The letters are written in a form of Sanskrit. But the string with which the wooden tablets are tied is sealed with a clay seal ; and in most cases the seal is a Greek seal, the image of an Athene or a Heracles.

Here then we touch three great civilisations at once : India, Greece, China.

Each of these three great civilisations contributes to the building up of Asiatic art. What, then, of the paintings and the sculpture?

The paintings are in outline, with a certain amount of flat colour, on a white ground. The subjects are figures from Buddhist legend. The style is of a primitive character.

If we ask ourselves what affinities these paintings reveal, with what art we can connect them, we

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cannot answer very definitely. We are reminded of features in Indian, Persian, Chinese, and early Japanese painting. But we have all too little material for comparison. What is certain is that these paintings represent, probably in a provincial type, the traditions of the early pictorial art of Asia, characterised by the definite strong outline on a white ground. They represent, we may safely assume, a whole world, whole epochs, of painting which are lost to us.

Will the sculptures tell us more? They at once remind us of other sculpture; of the numbers of statues and reliefs found in the district called Gandhara, lying along the lower valley of the Kabul river. These, like those of Khotan, are all Buddhist images. We know that the art of the sculptors of Gandhara was at its finest in the first and second centuries of our era. But in their statues we notice a gradual change and development. We see what seems a Greek Apollo; and then little by little the Greek features become more Indian; Apollo transforms himself into Buddha. The glad serenity of the Sun-God of the West, so open-eyed, so triumphant, takes on an ever-deepening shade of thought, the rapt smile of the world-withdrawn spirit contemplating eternity.

Here, then, in Gandhara, as farther east in Khotan, the art of Greece makes its power felt. We know how immense that power has been as a

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living influence through centuries of European art, and we may be tempted to ascribe to it a governing influence in Asia. Yet in truth these traces that we have noticed mark the ebb of a receding tide.

In 323 B.C., Alexander died in Babylon. He had carried the arts and civilisation of Hellas far into the East. Cities on sites that he had chosen, Kabul, Kandahar, endure to this day. He had penetrated into remote regions, north-west of India, and on into Turkestan. From the mouths of the Indus he had sent his fleet westward to explore the Indian Ocean. Arrian's narrative of the voyage reveals to us what a tremendous, unwilling adventure this was to the Greek sailors: they felt embarked on another Odyssey, and at every isle they touched expected legendary monsters to attack them. The will of one man, whose magnificent ambition was to conquer the world for the mind even more than to possess its riches and dominions, had hurried with him a home-sick army thousands of miles from its base, over deserts of burning sand, over mountains of perpetual snow, into the plains of India and to the shores of the Ganges. He reduced the Indian Ocean from a sea of terror and romance to known and navigated waters; he was preparing, even when death overtook him, to man his fleet again and send it from the Euphrates westward round the continent of Africa.

So much a single brain, filled with the conviction



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that "man's foe is ignorance," could do. He had brought Asia and Europe into contact, as they have never really been in contact since till Japan in our own day, filled with the passion for knowledge, absorbed the achievements and the civilisation of the West.

But Alexander died, not forty years old ; and after his death the two continents shrank apart. Even his own exploits relapsed into fable. He became a hero of romance. Even now in common opinion he is conceived as a dazzling figure of knight-errantry in the mists of history, too remote to be more than half believed in. His empire was split into fragments. One of these fragments was Bactria (Bokhara) ; and there, it has been supposed, a school of sculptors maintained some tradition of the art of Greece, though the traces of Greek style visible in the statues of Gandhara are now generally thought to be due rather to later contact with the Roman world. Still, it was Alexander who gave Hellas her footing in Asia.

In spite of the tendency of the two continents to shrink apart, the lines of communication between East and West were more open than is commonly supposed. Darius had already sent an expedition eastwards to explore Asia and discover the mouths of the Indus. Great trade routes were established. Nor was all the enterprise on the side of the West. In 200 B.C. the Chinese, seeking markets for their

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silk, opened communications with Western Asia. A century later the Emperor Wu Ti sent a mission to the same regions. Greek designs appear on the earliest metal mirrors of China. It is possible that in the Chinese fable of the Paradise of the West\* the myths of the Greeks may be reflected.

Conquest and commerce we note, therefore, as two powerful influences in the dissemination of the arts. But a third and far more powerful influence was religion.

The history of the art of Asia is intimately bound up with the history of Buddhism. By the growth and spread of that religion all the various influences we have noticed in the arts of many races were swept along and fused into a vitalising stream. Sakyamuni, the prince of a little territory in Nepal, who abandoned his throne, his wealth, and his family, stricken with the thought of the miseries of mankind ; who abandoned asceticism after years of practice, as he had abandoned the world before, and at last found enlightenment in the discovery that all evil resided in the individual will to live—Sakyamuni lived and died in the sixth century B.C. Three centuries later the religion of the Enlightened One, the Buddha, Sakyamuni, was embraced by the great Emperor Asoka, that pure and lofty soul whom Marcus Aurelius would have hailed with fraternal

\* H. A. Giles, " *Adversaria Sinica*," No. 1.

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emotion, whose name is venerated over all the East, who united India, and whose mild edicts engraved on pillars were set up all over India, and are found standing to-day in Ceylon. The Buddhist art encouraged by Asoka was affected by Western sculpture, whether through inheritance from Alexander's conquest, or through contact with Roman art, or through both of these influences ; and thus the Græco-Indian style was born.

Soon Buddhism spread beyond the confines of India. Its destiny was to wander. In time it died out completely from the land which had given it birth, but was passing like a fire over Asia, kindling and transforming new and diverse races. In Gandhara the flame of enthusiasm burnt fiercely, and then died, as it would seem, of its very excess. In A.D. 404 a pilgrim found five hundred temples in that country, thronged with worshippers. By the seventh century all were in ruins. Meanwhile Buddhism had reached China. In A.D. 67 the Emperor Ming Ti sent across the Himalayas to seek the truth about this religion. His messengers, we know, brought back images with them. During the next centuries many were the Chinese pilgrims who crossed the mountain passes to visit the sacred sites. Most famous of these is Fa Hsien, who journeyed, A.D. 399-414, from China through Khotan westward, entered India through Gandhara and Peshawar, visited the sacred sites in the ancient

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kingdom of Magadha, and returned home over sea by way of Ceylon. This we know from the record he has left.

From China to India Fa Hsien travelled over the great beaten route which was only to be closed in later times by the conquering Mohammedans. By this same route Buddhism had travelled from India into China. It had, we cannot doubt, a transforming influence on the art of the countries through which it passed. In Gandhara it combines with Hellenism to give a new character to the native Asiatic style. Moving east, it impresses its genius on the painting and sculpture of Turkestan, but less in the way of style than in the way of content. The Khotan paintings point to the existence of a tradition of painting which seems to have been common to the Asian continent, and may well have flourished in Central Asia before the advent of Buddhism. Passing yet farther north-east, we come to Turfan; and here a German expedition discovered in 1903 a number of paintings which exhibit the Buddhist character in a mature form, the form which we know through still finer art—the early religious masterpieces of China and Japan. Yet more recently another German expedition has brought back frescoes which have not yet been made public, but are said to be of even higher importance, as well as manuscripts of extraordinary interest for the study of philology and religion.

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These latter throw light on the history of Manichæism and of its founder Mani, who attempted to combine in one religion Christianity, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism. Doubtless there are other sites waiting to be explored.

And so we come to China itself. Though some writers have presumed that Buddhism in this long journey northward and eastward created art as it went, and found in China but rudimentary beginnings which its inspiration at once transformed, I believe, on the contrary, that Chinese art was fully developed before Buddhism brought its new store of motive and imagery. I shall presently show what evidence supports this view. But first let us see what we have ascertained already.

Asia in the first centuries of our era we have found to be not sharply divided into self-contained empires, but a continent in which communication was so free that not only the commodities of trade, but the animating ideals of religion, could bring about a fertilising contact between its different races. To assume that the cradle and origin of Asiatic art belonged to any one country of the continent in particular would be a vain supposition, an unprofitable starting-point for inquiry. We must rather assume that there was, in painting at all events, a common Asiatic style, an art of line; and our aim should be to inquire which of the races of Asia developed this style to finest use

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and power. It would be natural, in lack of evidence, to suppose that India, which gave to Asia the kindling ideals and imagery of Buddhism, was the land to which we should turn for the noblest creations of art. Yet we are confronted at once by the fact that in creative art India is comparatively poor.

One great monument of Indian painting remains—the frescoes of the cave-temple of Ajantâ, dating from the fifth to the seventh centuries A.D. In a gorge of the Western Ghâts, among magnificent mountain scenery, the Buddhist monks hewed out of living rock this vast temple of many caves, cool in their gloom even when the neighbouring valleys are scorched with unbearable heat. And here on the walls Indian artists painted the scenes of the life and death of Buddha. Darkened and damaged copies from some of these frescoes hang in the Indian Museum at South Kensington; but the paintings can be studied to far better purpose in the two large and elaborately illustrated volumes published by Mr. John Griffiths in 1896. The art of Ajantâ is characterised by the strong outline which marks the early Asiatic style; the colouring appears to have been heavy and hot; the figures and faces are animated, there is force and individuality in them, a strong sense of life. We feel that the painters were possessed by their subject; they worked with fervour and devotion. This,

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and the scale of the frescoes, make a forcible and imposing impression. Yet the art of Ajantâ has not passed the primitive stage. With all the feeling for life in individual figures that the painters show, they betray as yet little of that instinct by which an art develops—the instinct towards unity, towards the conception of a subject as a synthetic whole. Their compositions are crowded and incoherent. In details and in single groups and forms, on the other hand, there is grace, dignity, and character.

The same Indian artists, or artists of the same school, were probably the authors of a less important but very interesting series of cave-paintings found in the rock of Sîgiri in Ceylon, an abrupt mass rising from a plateau which was occupied and fortified at the end of the fifth century by the parricide king Kassapa. These paintings consist of about sixteen pictures of women deities or queens, attended by maids who carry lotus-flowers in their hands.\* The colours employed are shades of yellow, red, and green.

But, for some reason or other, painting as an art did not develop congenially in India. With the decay of Buddhism the art decayed also.

\* See the report of Mr. H. C. P. Bell in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Ceylon Branch, 1897, p. 115. For a note on these paintings I am indebted to Mr. A. K. Coomaraswami.

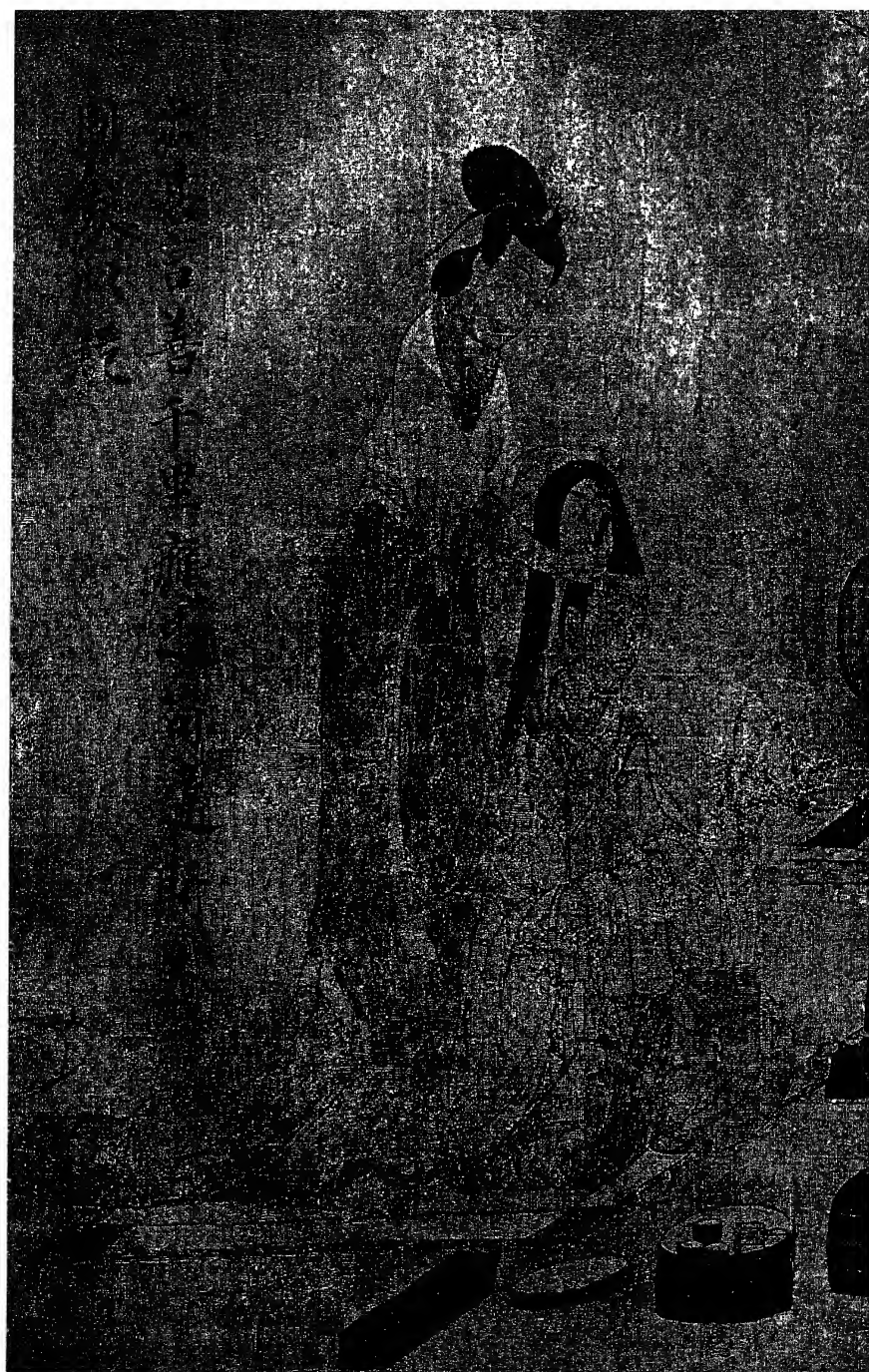
PLATE I  
TOILET SCENE

PORTION OF A SCROLL-PAINTING BY KU K'AI-CHIH

*British Museum*









### CHAPTER III. CHINESE PAINTING IN THE FOURTH CENTURY

**I**T has hitherto been assumed that the frescoes of Ajantâ are the earliest Asiatic paintings known to us. It has been assumed that nothing of the pictorial art of China, the third of the three great civilisations which we found met together in Central Asia, has been preserved of a date prior to the time of the T'ang dynasty.

Five years ago, however, the British Museum became possessed of a Chinese painting of the fourth century.

Seeing that no other picture of this period is known to exist (except in China,\* which keeps its secrets), nor indeed any picture earlier than the eighth century, it is evident that this painting is a document of capital importance. It will be asked at once on what grounds it is assigned to a date so remote.

The picture is signed with the name of Ku K'ai-chih, a very famous artist, ranked by the Chinese among their greatest names in painting. This of itself counts for little, and in fact the signature

\* Professor Adolf Fischer, of Berlin, informs me that he saw a picture by Ku K'ai-chih in the collection of the Viceroy at Nanking ; and the Viceroy spoke of a few other examples in other Chinese collections.

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is almost certainly a later addition. But it also bears, among a great number of collectors' seals, the seal of the imperial collection. Now this collection was catalogued in the early part of the twelfth century. The catalogue, published anonymously, is known as the "Hsüan ho hua p'u." In it, seventh among the nine paintings by Ku K'ai-chih, is "Admonitions of the Female Historian," the exact title which the picture now in the Museum bears on the outside. The picture is painted on a long roll of silk, and at the end of it is a eulogy of the painter, written in 1746 by the hand of Ch'ien Lung, the famous Emperor, who certainly believed in its authenticity, and who could rely on the most skilled connoisseurship of his day. "The picture has not lost its freshness," he wrote; and "Of the painter's four works this is the best." Among the many collectors' seals are those of Sung Ch'i, a statesman of the eleventh century, and of Hui Tsung, the artist-Emperor of the twelfth; and these seals have every appearance of being genuine. On seals, as on signature, however, I will lay no stress, as no forgery is complete without them.

What is of far greater importance is the fact that the book which the painting illustrates is a known book, and that some of the scenes depicted refer to recorded incidents. The Female Historian is a lady named Pan Chao, who lived in the first century

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A.D. She was the sister of an historian, whose work she continued, and was lady-in-waiting to the Empress. The book of hers which our painting illustrates is a book of moral advice to young women. When we add that the types, the costumes, and the style of painting are unlike any Chinese work known to us, there can be no reasonable doubt that the picture represents the art of the fourth-century master. Whether it is Ku K'ai-chih's actual handiwork or not, no one can prove with certainty. If not, it is a copy. The condition of the silk, repaired many times over with exquisite skill and care, shows that it is of high antiquity, as also that it has been most jealously preserved. Even a copy of a fourth-century painting would be of extraordinary interest ; indeed, as a document, of almost equal importance with an original. But that it is a copy is in the highest degree unlikely. The brushwork is confident and spontaneous. The hand that painted it was beyond all dispute the hand of a great master. It is true that in China and Japan great masters have copied their predecessors, but in such cases as we know of the copy is a free one, whereas in this case curious details of dress and ornament are rendered in a way that only a servile copyist could reproduce. But it is time to describe the work itself. It is a roll of brown silk, a little over eleven feet long, a little over nine inches wide. On it are painted

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eight scenes. The subject of the first has been identified by Professor Chavannes, of the Collège de France. The story is told that on a certain occasion, when games were being held in the Emperor's presence, a bear broke loose. It was rushing towards the Emperor, when a lady boldly threw herself in its path. In the painting we see her, a superb figure, with folded arms, confronting the furious animal, which two tall guards step forward to despatch with their broad-bladed spears. The three figures are admirably disposed and brought together, and effective use is made of the straight lines of the spears in a pyramidal design.

Another subject which has a historical basis shows the lady Pan Chieh-yü (of the first century B.C.) refusing the Emperor's invitation to ride with him in his palanquin. "In days of old," she is reported to have answered, "only ministers rode beside their monarch." The other subjects illustrate maxims of the learned lady, Pan Chao. One is a toilet scene, in which a maid is dressing her mistress's hair before a round mirror; lacquer boxes lie on the floor beside them. Another, of great interest for the student of architecture, shows a bed-chamber. In another we are introduced to the family circle of the Imperial house. On one side sit the Emperor and Empress, on the other are two children with their nurses; one of them, a boy, is having his hair brushed and shrinks with a rebel-

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lious grimace. In the background a tutor is holding up a scroll for a child to read. The last subject is amusing. Two ladies of the court are standing together, talking scandal, and looking contemptuously at the Female Historian; but she is having her revenge: she is writing down what she knows of the court and courtiers, and posterity will read her record.

In the middle of the roll is a landscape. A mountain, wrinkled with fissures, rears up its crags. On a lower ledge are two hares; higher up is a tiger. Apparently belonging to this subject is a man aiming with a cross-bow at a flying pheasant. The tiger is many times too large; there is no sense of diminishing planes, nor of atmosphere. The mountain is treated like the hills in some early Italian pictures. This is noteworthy, because it is the only primitive feature in the painting. It precisely bears out the observation of a Chinese critic\* of the eighth century, who writes of the landscape of Ku K'ai-chih's period that the mountains were drawn stiffly "like hairpins and combs," and that the figures were made larger than the mountains.

For the rest, it is obvious that figure-painting at least had already arrived at maturity. The figures are outlined with a brush in ink, the roundness of forms and folds of drapery suggested by light

\* Chang Yen-Yüan, "Famous Painters of Different Dynasties."



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strokes of grey or red. Sometimes the spaces within the contours are left uncoloured, sometimes there is 'a tint of vermilion, either opaque or diluted. A tawny yellow, a dull green, and a mulberry purple have also been used ; but these colours have sunk into the silk and lost much of their original value. The general effect is of a painting in black, grey, and vermilion red on a background of mellow brown.

Both types and costume are remarkable. The ladies are of a taller, statelier elegance than any we find in later Chinese art. They wear flowing robes, from which scarves or ribbons of some light and soft material float and wave in the air. In the thick masses of hair bound up on their heads are two upright ornaments of crimson colour and delicate design ; they look like cups full of springing flames. We note in the toilet scene the refined simplicity of shape prevailing in all the accessories.

In actual beauty of delicately modulated brush-line, sensitively sweet, yet confident in power, no painting of later ages surpasses this. It is suave and tender, yet never soft or weak ; firm and precise, yet never dry. The calligraphic element is there, as in all Chinese painting ; but there is also unusual lifelikeness and humour. How beautifully felt is the action of the hands of the tall maiden knotting up the coil of hair in the toilet scene ! How delightfully realised the boy

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struggling on his nurse's knees! How one feels pride, courage, and will in the attitude of the lady who faces the raging bear! How the bearers groan and struggle under the weight of the palanquin bearing the serene Emperor! We are made to feel all this, and at the same time we feel the painter's enjoyment of pure rhythm in following with his fine brush the wave of the light drapery that streams from the ladies' robes.

An undercurrent of humour and playfulness is perceptible in the work, revealing something of the painter's personality. As a matter of fact we know more about Ku K'ai-chih (it is odd to reflect) than we do about many an English painter of the nineteenth century.

He was a native of Wu-hsi, in Kiangsu. In 364 a Buddhist monastery wanted money. Ku put his name down for a million *cash*. This was thought mere boasting, and he was dunned by the priests. He asked for time, and shut himself up for a month. When the doors were opened a resplendent full-length figure of the Buddhist saint Vimalakirti glorified the wall, and visitors flocking in wonder and admiration made up the promised sum. Many of his pictures were of Buddhist subjects, but he was especially famed for the spirituality and expressiveness of his portraits. Expression, not merely likeness, was what he aimed at. He remarked himself on the difficulty in

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portraiture of imparting to his subjects the air that each should have—in short, of revealing personality. The bloom and soft modelling of a young girl's face appealed to him less than features showing character and experience. "Painting a pretty girl is like carving in silver," he said; "it is no use trying to get a likeness by elaboration; one must trust to a touch here and a stroke there to suggest the essence of her beauty." When he painted a certain noble character, he set him in a background of "lofty peaks and deep ravines," to harmonise with the lofty, great nature of the man. The thought might be that of our own Watts.

Ku K'ai-chih painted landscapes, though, as we have seen, these were probably primitive in style; and also animals. He said of a favourite poem: "It is easier to illustrate the verse, *The hand sweeps the five strings of the lute*, than this other verse, *The eyes follow the flight of the wild goose*. We may perhaps infer from this saying that Chinese art was already grappling with the study of birds in flight and animals in motion, which was to play so potent a part in the painting of the Far East.

What other subjects did he paint? We know at least the titles of several. Among others are these: "A Hermit of Pure Fame," "Three Heavenly Beauties," "The Great Yü Draining the Empire," "An Ancient Worthy," "The Spring Dragon Rising from its Winter Sleep," "Making a Lute," "Tend-

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ing Sheep," "Eleven Lions," "Tiger and Leopard with Vultures," "Goddesses," "A Buddhist Assembly," "Division of Buddhist Relics."

A famous critic, two centuries later, praised Ku K'ai-chih for his fineness of detail and unerring hand, but pronounced his execution to fall short of his conceptions. Some of the titles just given certainly suggest conceptions of poetic force and grandeur which the characteristics of the one work known to us would hardly lead us to expect. But, as every student of the art of the Far East is aware, the painting of the ancient schools is singularly various in style: the style varied with the subject, for a traditional mode of treatment attached to each order of themes. Some of Ku K'ai-chih's religious pictures were probably in a grand and monumental style, as the story of his painting of Vimalakirti indicates.

It was said of Ku that he was supreme in poetry, supreme in painting, and supreme in foolishness. We may conceive of him as an original nature, careless of the world's opinion, going his own way and rather enjoying the bewilderment of ordinary people at his behaviour. He is said to have been a believer in magic. He was noted for his way of eating sugarcane: he began at the wrong end, and entered, as he expressed it, gradually into Paradise. He had a whimsical, exaggerated manner of expressing himself.

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Professor Chavannes, who has been able approximately to fix the date of the artist's death as some year after 405, relates some instances of his skill at one of the literary games dear to the Chinese. At a party of friends it was proposed to find an image which should give the most vivid idea of a thing finished and ended. One of the company suggested this: "A fish thrown into deep water; a bird let loose into the air." Ku K'ai-chih said: "A plain entirely consumed with fire, the last flame of which has died out." On another occasion danger was the theme. One said: "To gather rice with a spear, and cook it on the sword's point." Ku K'ai-chih said: "A sightless man riding a blind horse on the brink of a fathomless lake." This was too much for the nerves of one of those present, who had weak eyes, and left the room.

Do we even now seem so remote from such an atmosphere as Ku K'ai-chih breathed? It is the atmosphere of an age of civilised grace, of leisured thought, of refined culture. The artist himself deals in critical ideas. There is a modern tone in his comments on art. He has an Epicurean strain in his nature.

History and literature fill out the picture of the age. It was a time of revolt from convention. Artists and poets were under the spell of the teaching of Lao Tzŭ, who, as against the social obedience prescribed by Confucius, taught the virtues of

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individuality and freedom. A famous contemporary of Ku K'ai-chih's, T'ao Ch'ien, was a typical figure of the time and its ideas. He obtained an appointment as magistrate, but resigned it in three months because he could not bring himself to receive a superior officer with the recognised ceremonial. "I cannot crook the hinges of my back for a salary," he said. So he retired into private life and devoted himself to poetry, music, and the culture of the chrysanthemum. The poem he wrote on his retirement and return home is a charming piece, and a celebrated classic.\*

This reaction to simplicity and nature, the symptom of an advanced not of a primitive civilisation, is reflected in that intimate glimpse of the Imperial family which we have noticed in Ku K'ai-chih's picture: it is naturalness rather than homeliness which distinguishes the group from the ceremonial stiffness usual to courts; there is no absence of dignity in the absence of pomp and parade.

And now let us turn again from these scenes, this life of social charm, of modern elegance and leisured philosophy, to the cave-temple of Ajantâ. I had almost written "turn back," for it is difficult to realise that the painters of the Ajantâ frescoes lived and worked two centuries after Ku K'ai-chih was dead. We seem to step back to primitive times, certainly to an art which by comparison is primitive.

\* See the prose translation in Giles, "Chinese Literature," p. 129.

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The refined rhythm, the delicate power, the restrained colour of Ku K'ai-chih's brush bespeak a development of the art of painting which the artists of Ajantâ are far from having reached. Moreover, in the Museum painting there is no trace whatever of any impress from Indian or Græco-Indian art.

I wish to emphasise this point, because it has been often assumed, as I have already said, that the art of China only rose from a rudimentary stage at the vitalising touch of Buddhist inspiration from India. Buddhism doubtless proved a potent spiritual influence, but it could never have taken so firm a hold in China had the mystic ideas of Lao Tzŭ not prepared the Chinese mind for its acceptance. We note in Ku K'ai-chih a certain lightness of tone, far removed from the fervent religious intensity of the Ajantâ frescoes; and indeed that intensity of conviction and feeling does not seem to have prevailed in the Buddhist painting of China till the time of the T'ang dynasty, when the religion had penetrated far more deeply into the soul of the nation.

To China then, not to India, we must turn to find, if not the parent art of Asia, its earliest mature flower in painting. And from this early epoch onward, while the other countries of Asia yield but scattered evidence of their schools of painting, China has left a continuous record of famous artists, and an endless amount of allusion and

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criticism, which testify to the unrivalled vitality of its schools and their importance in the life of the nation. Religious art is naturally conservative in types and forms and mode of treatment. Hence the union of Indian conceptions and symbolism with the forms of Greek plastic art, which produced what we call the Græco-Indian style, leaves its unmistakable trace on the Buddhist painting and sculpture of China and of Japan. But the Greek element can easily be exaggerated. I have quoted already the story, from the Persian poem of the twelfth century, of the competition between the two opposed schools of art, the Greek and the Chinese. I believe that here we have the clue to the right conception. The great original art tradition of Europe has its home in Greece; the great original art tradition of Asia has its home in China. Each race is pre-eminent in its feeling for harmony and rhythm, the foundation of all art. "Indian art," says a Japanese critic\* who has written with learning and authority on early Asiatic painting, "is the most modern of all Oriental artistic efforts." And the Indian genius never was pictorial. The glory of India lies in another direction; in thought, in philosophy, in the formulation of religious ideals. We shall see later how a development of Buddhist doctrine was so profoundly to influence the whole Japanese race

\* Kosaku Hamada, the *Kokka*, No. 188.



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that its imbibed ideal became a second nature, the fruits of which have been shown to all of us during the recent conflict with Russia.

What is lacking in the Ajantâ paintings, what is so signally manifest in Chinese painting throughout its history, is that powerful creative instinct and æsthetic perception which make for synthetic unity in art, that sense of controlling rhythm and balance which inspires all fine design. Wherever Chinese influence appears in pictorial art, we find also a calligraphic element, inevitable in the productions of a nation trained to use the brush in writing.

Although, as we shall see later, Turkestan borrowed from China in its painting, and Persia again from Turkestan, this calligraphic element tends to die out as the more Western nations, users of the pen, develop their own schools.

## CHAPTER IV. THE ORIGINS AND EARLIEST PHASES OF PICTORIAL ART IN CHINA

**C**ENTURIES, it is obvious, many centuries, must have gone to the moulding of an art which could produce so mature and so refined a work as this painting of Ku K'ai-chih's.

Legend, indeed, throws back the origin of Chinese painting to 2700 B.C. There is no need to doubt that the art is of great antiquity. According to native historians, it came into existence at the same time as the art of writing; and throughout the history of China the two arts are intimately connected. A fine piece of calligraphy is valued as highly as a fine painting; and what is most prized in a picture is that the brushwork should be as personal to the artist as his handwriting. In either case the strokes should be full of life, an immediate and direct communication of the artist's mood and thought to the paper or silk on which he paints. The typical Chinese and Japanese painting corresponds, in fact, rather to the drawings of European masters; there is nothing in the East like the highly-finished oil-picture, in which the painting is a sort of confection, and there is no obvious

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revelation of the way in which the pigments got to be there. In the early frescoes, however, of the East and the West there is no essential difference.

Bronze vases and incense-burners dating from various periods B.C. still exist, masterpieces of this kind. The sculptural reliefs adorning a mausoleum in Shantung, built in 147 A.D., have become famous through the woodcut illustrations of a Chinese work devoted to them; and they have been treated in an exhaustive monograph by an eminent scholar, M. Edouard Chavannes. More important sculpture seems to have been destroyed by time. But for all evidence of pictorial art anterior to Ku K'ai-chih we must rely on literary record and allusion.

Professor Giles, in his "Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art," has collected the evidence available. We find a definite mention of portraiture as early as 1326 B.C. But not till the third and second centuries B.C. do references to painting become at all frequent. Already the Dragon is a favourite subject, and pictures of animals were common, but portraiture remains predominant for many centuries.

The encouragement of portraiture accorded indeed with the teachings of Confucius, that great and grave moralist of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., whose code of ethics has sunk so deep into the

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mind of China. Confucius, like Plato, held that art should serve the State; it should kindle and sustain the patriotic virtues. He attached high importance to the ballads of a nation; and the literature he rescued from oblivion and edited for posterity was chosen and prized for its effect on character. Filial piety was a supreme virtue in his eyes; therefore the portraits of the great men who had gone before were to furnish to each generation a stimulating and ennobling example. Music he also encouraged as promoting harmony between man and man; for the individual was to merge his own desires in the cause of the community. In Confucian theory the empire was one vast brotherhood recognising mutual duties, and the emperor's parental authority was based on nothing but the consent and choice of the people. How far the socialistic tendencies implied in the Confucian ideas could be developed into actual practice is seen in the attempt of a usurper in the first century A.D. to carry out an equal division of land among the whole people. He had already published an edict abolishing slavery. But the outraged nobles rose, and he was killed as he sat, unresisting, in his palace.\*

"Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay!" cries the hero of "Locksley Hall," for whom, as for most Englishmen, the name of China

\* Okakura, "Ideals of the East," p. 35.

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is a symbol of stagnation. More knowledge of China's history might have made the exclamation more appropriate to the mouth of a Tory landlord.

The power of Confucius over his countrymen lay, doubtless, in the fact that he represented the national character in a noble and commanding type. He represented what we may call its orthodoxy, its eminent reasonableness, its social instinct, its aptitude for peaceful living, and its genius for order. Yet Confucius does not sum up the whole of the Chinese nature.

Mr. G. Lowes Dickinson's eloquent little book of letters, put into the mouth of "John Chinaman," has justly found many admirers. It has provoked in America the indignation of Mr. Bryan, who supposed it to be really the work of a Celestial pen, and was wroth that an Oriental should presume to indict our Western civilisation. The view adopted in these letters is that China stands for the Confucian ideal and nothing else; and from this standpoint it is, of course, easy to contrast the ugliness and hypocrisies of Europe and America with the harmony and clearness of Chinese life. The letters hold up the success of the Chinese in embodying a sensible and practicable ideal in conduct against the failure of the West to make any reality of its professions of faith in its "idealistic religion." Yet this "John Chinaman," though he

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writes such glowing and persuasive prose, is, I think, unjust both to China and to Europe. The solution of the problems of government, the dwelling together of a people in harmony—these are admirable things to attain, but they alone will never satisfy human nature. After all, it is not likely that we shall ever rival ants in this respect. Mr. Dickinson makes his Chinaman write as if all idealistic religions were a mistake, and as if no such impossible aspirations had ever disturbed the serene centuries of China.

Yet listen to the voice of a Chinese sage :

“The Way that can be walked upon is not the eternal Way.”

“Follow diligently the Way in your own heart, but make no display of it to the world.”

“Recompense injury with kindness.”

“Do nothing, and all things will be done.”

These are words of Lao Tzŭ. How different an accent from the reasonable prose of Confucius !

Lao Tzŭ, the mystic, the proclaimer of paradoxes, the man of imagination, the seer, represents the other side of the Chinese genius. From this other imaginative side has flowered all that is most glowing and alive in Chinese painting and literature. And surely it is not least by her painting and her literature that China will live for the world.

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Lao Tzŭ, who was born fifty years before Confucius, represents the reaction of the individual soul against the communistic system of the latter. The Confucian ideas, especially as interpreted by the pedantry which is the besetting weakness of the Chinese intellect, tended in time to harden and to freeze. A revolt was necessary. However, Mr. Kakuzo Okakura has suggestively observed that "in this Eastern struggle between the two forces of communism and individual reaction, the ground of contest is not economic, but intellectual and imaginative."

In all creative art there is a similar contest or dualism. For all art conveys in varying proportions, but inextricably combined, ideas of order and ideas of energy or freedom. In pictorial art we find this dualism expressed, in its rudiment and essence, through the straight lines or regular curves of man's making, and the free lines of nature; the erect tower, the Roman road, contrast with the sinuous stream, the fretted branch, the melting edge of clouds. Perfect art holds the two elements in equilibrium; it satisfies both our instinct for order and our instinct for freedom. At bottom, the tendencies we label Classic and Romantic are based on this antithesis, and the preponderance now of one element, now of the other.

The ideas of Lao Tzŭ impregnated, as may be

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imagined, but rare and naturally original minds. He is traditionally regarded as the founder of Taoism, that popular cult which is chiefly associated with magic rites and exorcisms, and especially with the chimerical pursuit of the elixir of immortality. But as in Taoism the pure authentic doctrine of the sage has been entirely submerged in a wild mass of superstition, Mr. Okakura has proposed the name Laoism as a conveniently distinctive title for the yet uncorrupted teaching of Lao Tzŭ. And in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries A.D. Laoism was a spirit of power.

In the third century we meet with the name of a painter, Wei Hsieh, said to have been the first artist to paint detail, who excelled in "Taoist and Buddhist subjects." The collocation of the names is significant. Buddhism, which by now was taking hold of China, found its adherents chiefly among the followers of Lao Tzŭ. They found in the Indian religion their own philosophy presented in a more developed form. The Buddhist images too were welcomed as those of one of their own gods.

Before long, it is true, rivalry was engendered, and Buddhism had to face bitter persecution. But at first the attitude of Taoism was friendly, and the Indian religion was allowed to take strong hold. Indeed, the special doctrines of the Zen sect

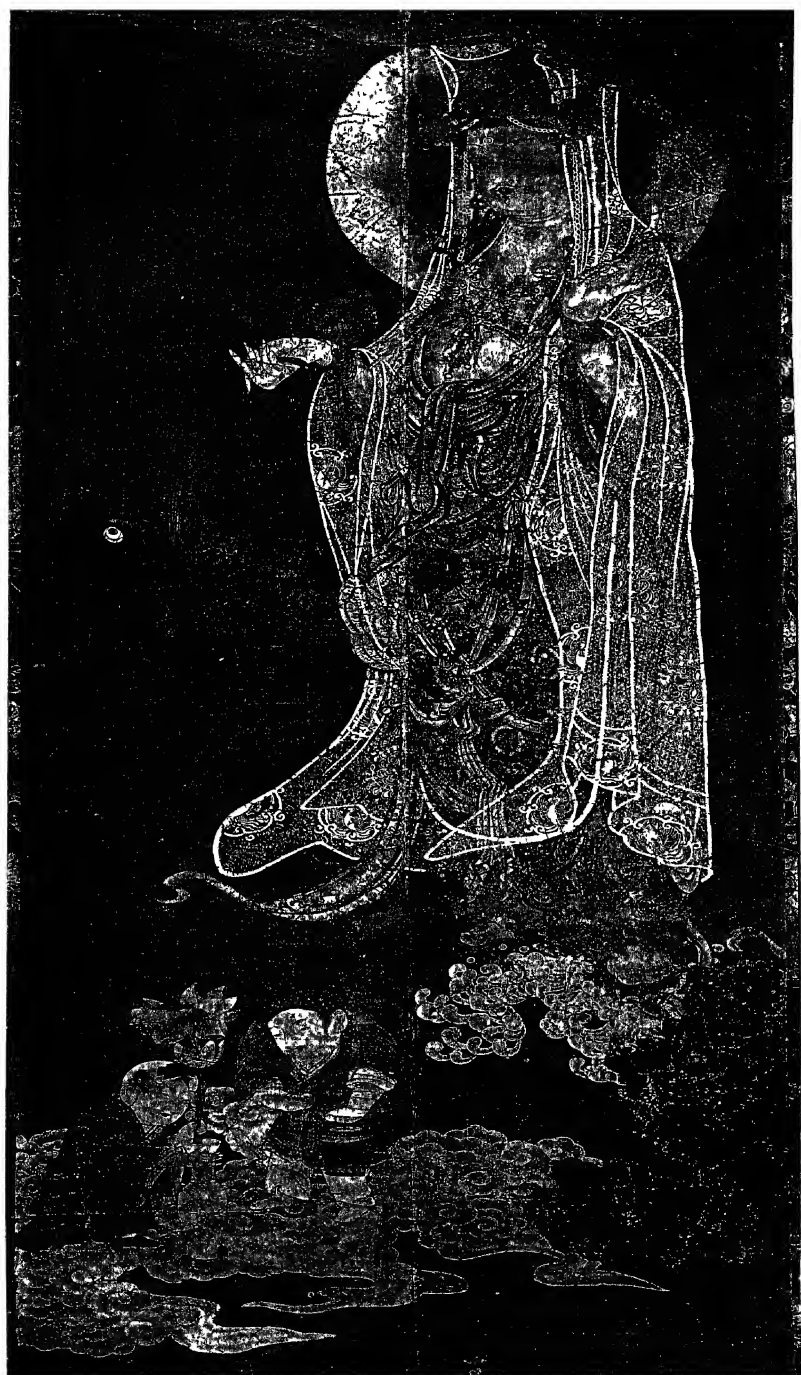


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of Buddhism, so potent in inspiration for the art of the Sung period in China and the Ashikaga period in Japan, derived not a little from the teaching of Lao Tzŭ. So we come to the fourth century, and to Ku K'ai-chih.

PLATE II  
THE DIVINE SUSTENANCE OF THE WORLD  
AFTER WU TAO-TZŮ, BY A MASTER OF THE SUNG DYNASTY  
*Freer Collection, Detroit*







## CHAPTER V. CHINESE PAINTING FROM THE FOURTH TO THE EIGHTH CENTURY

**A**N older contemporary of Ku K'ai-chih's is recorded to have painted a picture on white hemp paper. This, according to Professor Giles, is probably the earliest mention of that material. Paintings were usually made with a brush, upon silk, which about the first century had superseded the earlier bamboo and stylus. From now onwards to the present day both silk and paper have been used in China, as in Japan, for painting; but silk has always been the more common material.

From the fourth century to the eighth we have no tangible monument of pictorial art, though history records the names and works of a long roll of painters. To fill these pages with the record, for which the student should refer to Dr. Giles's book, is not my purpose. But it may be well to say something of the various subjects which formed the content of these painters' art, since they will recur again and again in the works of later times.

First we must mention those great symbolic figures which had early taken shape and meaning

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in the Chinese imagination—the Dragon and the Tiger. Both are symbols of power. In the superstitions of literal minds the Dragon was the genius of the element of water, producing clouds and mists; the Tiger the genius of the mountains, whose roaring is heard in the wind that shakes the forest. But in the imagination of poets and of artists these symbols became charged with spiritual meanings, meanings which we should regard as fluid rather than fixed, and of import varying with the dominant conceptions of particular epochs. In the Dragon is made visible the power of the spirit, the power of the infinite, the power of change; in the Tiger, the power of material forces. When the Tiger was portrayed simply as the royal beast, it was painted in the colours of nature. But when conceived as a symbolic power, it was always painted in ink only, like the Dragon. The two subjects have been painted as a pair of pictures by almost every artist of note who worked in the Chinese tradition, whether in China or Japan.

The Dragon is typical of the creative faculties of the Chinese genius, which had a singular gift for moulding into shapes of vivid and formidable reality those shadowy terrors of the unknown and the non-human world that survive in mankind from the infancy of the race; not without unconscious actual memory, perhaps, of a time when the monsters of primæval ages still existed. The

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earliest Chinese bronzes betray a power akin to that which inspired such mediæval sculptors of Europe as those who carved the famous gargoyles of Notre Dame. And in the creation of demons and fantastic beasts and birds the Chinese genius is vividly inventive.

The Confucian ideals promoted portraiture, also the exploits of heroes and the classic stories of filial piety. Of these last there is a chosen set of Twenty-four Examples. In most of the stories they illustrate there is an element of childishness and extravagance, and this is probably one reason why these themes do not seem to have provoked masterpieces. Another reason is that imaginative artists were attracted rather by the ideas of Taoism and Buddhism.

Taoism gave to art some of its most romantic subjects. Chief among these are those themes connected with the Rishi or Wizards of the Mountains. These were human beings who had abandoned the world, who abstained from all nourishment but fruits and dew, and who by the practice of certain mystic arts had attained to an ethereal existence and the enjoyment of immortality. They form a mysterious brotherhood, who ride on storks through the air, or traverse the mountains on the backs of fabulous animals, or meet together in mountain retreats. They are pictured as beings of mystery, yet with nothing of



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the haggard foulness of the European conception of witch and wizard ; their genius is one of gaiety and world-forgetting youth. The stork, the tortoise, the pine, plum, and bamboo were their accompanying emblems. With such conceptions the Buddhist Arhats might seem at first to have a not unfraternal kinship. These were the immediate disciples of Buddha, first sixteen, afterwards eighteen, in number—the Chinese call them Lohan, the Japanese, Rakan—and their figures are familiar in every form of the art of the two countries. They too haunt the mountain solitudes ; but theirs is not the careless smile of the wild Rishi : they are rapt in intense meditation, they breathe a spiritual air, they are forms of grandeur and intellectual power. Yet sometimes, when represented in a company, they lose their solemn Indian aloofness ; their aspect takes on something of the genial lightness of the Flowery Land, and we see them crossing the waters of ocean to the Paradise of Mount Horai in the legendary West, where the Faerie Queen, the goddess Si Wang Mu, awaits them with the mystic peaches in her hand, the taste of which is immortality. Here we have in a single subject the blending of Buddhist and Taoist conceptions ; for Si Wang Mu belongs to the supernatural world of Taoism, though originally, as Dr. Giles has suggested, her legend may reflect Greek myth, the goddess Hera,

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the apples of the Hesperides, and the river of Ocean at the boundaries of the world. Yet normally the Arhats are pictured as single figures, each with his attendant lion, tiger, or other guardian emblem, and thus portrayed often strangely recall the hermit saints of Christian art. The first mention of the Arhats in Chinese painting dates from the sixth century.

Endless were the subjects of the Buddhist painters; for Buddhism, as it grew and spread abroad, absorbed into itself a mass of alien conceptions, and transformed to its uses a hundred forms from the Pantheon of Indian mythology. Moreover, the personification of every varying mood of Buddha and Bodhisattva created through the multiplication of images an ever-increasing array of individual deities.

Here, since it is impossible to suggest more than the outline of so vast a subject, I will merely touch on two points. One is the absence of the dramatic instinct. In the story of Sakyamuni there are moments of moving drama, which the artists of Europe would, one cannot doubt, have eagerly seized on for representation. There is, for instance, that moment when the young prince, brought up in luxury and ignorance of death as of pain, meets outside the gates of his city an old man leaning on a staff, withered and bent: What ails him? Has he been so from his birth? asked the

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Prince, only to learn from his attendants that this was the inevitable end of youth and glorious manhood, the end to which all must come. I can recall but one painting of this subject, by the Japanese fifteenth-century master, Motonobu, and he treats it but impassively. Think what Giotto would have made of such a theme, or Rembrandt ! Again, there is the moment when at midnight Sakyamuni, resolved to quit the world for solitude, comes to take farewell of his sleeping wife, and his boy, Rahula. He longs to take the child up in his arms ; he stretches out his hands to do so ; but he fears to wake them, and silently goes out. What a subject for Leonardo, for Correggio ! Pictures of it must exist, but I never saw nor heard of one. Yet we should not wonder at this, after all ; for human tenderness, human love, human emotion, are in that high doctrine of Buddha bound up with the rooted evil of individual existence. Therefore the Buddhist painters concentrate their power on types of intellectual peace, every line in whose calm features, in drooped eyelid, in wide forehead, bent slightly forward, in unruffled fold of drapery, lays a spell upon the mind, woos it from the restless world, and draws it inward to the divine ecstasy of absolute contemplation. In all the art of the world there is nothing more impressive, nothing of more pure religious feeling, than some of those noblest creations of Buddhist genius. Yet

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how we miss in the religious art of Asia those consecrations of humanity which form the centre of the religious art of Europe! Even in the East those human cravings and instincts which have been touched to ennobling beauty by the painters and sculptors of Christendom have not been without some outlet of expression; and the abstraction of Love and Mercy which found form in India as Avalokitesvara, named in China, Kwan-yin, in Japan, Kwannon, is transformed\* in the course of time from a male angelic figure to that of a woman, often with a child, mistaken sometimes by Europeans for an Oriental borrowing of that perpetual theme of Christian art, the sublimation of Motherhood in the Madonna.

The other point I wish to notice is the element of grotesqueness which pervades the Indian mythology, and which was constantly at war with the finer instincts of the Chinese artists. Grotesqueness is not the right word perhaps, for of the true grotesque the Chinese are naturally masters. I mean those symbolic figures of deities with many heads, or eyes, or arms, which are not genuinely pictorial or plastic conceptions, but literal translations of the verbal imagery of which Indian literature is profuse—an origin totally different from that which gave birth to the Chinese dragon, or

\* The change appears to date from the twelfth century. Giles, "Introduction, &c.," p. 21.

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such European creations as "Le Stryge." Hieratic art preserves its types with little change ; but in the religious painting of China and of Japan, the early productions of which are often almost or quite impossible to distinguish between, there is a visible effort, whether conscious or unconscious, to subdue this inherited element by cunning disposition of forms into harmonious rhythm.

Rhythm, indeed, is recognised as the vital essence of art. It was in this period that the criticism of painting was formulated by a writer who was himself an artist, Hsieh Ho (Shakaku in Japanese), who flourished in the sixth century.

The Six Canons of Hsieh Ho crystallise the conceptions of art which had already long pervaded the minds of his countrymen in a less definite form, and have been unanimously accepted by posterity. First, then, comes rhythmic vitality, or, as Mr. Okakura translates it, "the life-movement of the spirit through the rhythm of things." Next comes organic structure. The creative spirit incarnates itself in a pictorial conception, which thereby takes on the organic structure of life. Third comes the law of conformity with nature ; fourth, appropriate colouring ; fifth, arrangement ; sixth, finish.

Throughout the course of Asian painting the idea that art is the imitation of nature is unknown, or known only as a despised and fugitive heresy.

PLATE III  
LANDSCAPE

PORTION OF A SCROLL-PAINTING BY CHAO MENG-FU,  
COPIED FROM A PAINTING BY WANG WEI

*British Museum*









## CHAPTER VI. THE T'ANG DYNASTY

**T**HE main great epochs of Chinese painting are easy to grasp and remember. After the immense tract of time from which no painting is known to survive except the single picture by Ku K'ai-chih which we have described—though others doubtless exist in Chinese private collections—after this long period we arrive at the T'ang dynasty, extending from A.D. 618 to 905. A short period of half a century follows, known as the Five Dynasties. Then come :

The Sung dynasty, 960–1280.

The Yüan or Mongol dynasty, 1280–1368.

The Ming dynasty, 1368–1644 ; and finally

The Ch'ing or Manchu dynasty, still reigning.

The T'ang era stands in history for the period of China's greatest external power—the period of her greatest poetry and of her grandest and most vigorous, if not, perhaps, her most perfect, art. Buddhism now took hold on the nation as it had never done before, and its ideals pervaded the imagination of the time. China was never in such close contact with India ; numbers of Indians, including three hundred Buddhist monks, actively

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preaching the faith, were to be found in the T'ang capital of Lo-yang.

It was the T'ang age which produced the painter who by universal consent of later times ranks above all other masters of his country. Wu Tao-tzŭ, whom the Japanese call Godoshi, was born about the beginning of the eighth century, near the capital city of Lo-yang. He showed as a youth extraordinary powers, and the Emperor gave him a post at court. His fertility of imagination and his fiery swiftness of execution alike astounded his contemporaries. He is said to have painted over three hundred frescoes on the walls of temples alone. He was prodigal of various detail, but what chiefly impressed spectators was the overpowering reality of his creations.

In the art of T'ang there was a conscious effort to unite calligraphy with painting. By this we must understand that painters strove for expression through brush-work which had at once the life-communicating power of lines that suggest the living forms of reality and the rhythmical beauty inherent in the modulated sweep of a masterly writer; for to write the Chinese characters beautifully is to have a command of the brush such as any painter might envy. We cannot doubt that Wu Tao-tzŭ possessed this union of qualities in an extraordinary degree. After his death an old man attached to a certain temple used to tell how,

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when the great master painted the aureole of a god, all the people of the place, young and old, educated men and labourers, gathered in crowds to watch him. With a single stroke the aureole was completed, as if a whirlwind had driven the brush: his hand, all declared, must have been guided by a god. We are told that Wu Tao-tzŭ used a fine brush when young, but one of great thickness in middle life. But though his calligraphic mastery was so wonderful, it was his imaginative realism and his tremendous powers of conception that made him supreme. The robes of his angels moved as if the wind were in them. His dragons seemed to shake the air; his men and women breathed, charmed, awed, ennobled. His picture of the Buddhist Purgatory affrighted thousands from their sins. He painted a great picture of Sakyamuni among ten of his disciples. But most famous of all his works was the large composition of the "Death of Buddha," of which more than one version existed.

Alas! of all the mighty works of Wu Tao-tzŭ none now is known certainly to survive. Once, in a dream, I myself beheld them all, but awoke with the memory of them faded in a confusion of gorgeous colour, all except one, which remained with me, strangely distinct. A goddess-like form was standing between two pillars of the mountains, not less tall herself. I remember the beauty of the drawing of

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her hands, as their touch lingered on either summit; for her arms were extended, and between them, as her head bent forward, the deep mass of hair was slowly slipping to her breast, half-hiding the one side of her face, which gazed downward. At her feet was a mist, hung above dim woods, and from human dwellings unseen the smoke rose faintly. The whole painting was of a rare translucent, glaucous tone. May I be permitted the impertinence of this intrusion? since only in dream can we ever hope to see most of those lost masterpieces of one of the world's great artists.

Yet there is something to build our dreams on. A few paintings in Japan have long been attributed to Wu Tao-tzü, though modern criticism questions them. There is a set of three pictures, representing Sakyamuni, and two Bodhisattvas, Samantabhadra, and Manjusri. If not by the master himself (and Mr. Tajima, who has published them in his "Select Relics," vol. i., accepts them as genuine), it seems certain that these pictures reflect his style. Boldly outlined, the figures betray a latent force and impress as if by a living presence. There is a grandeur and freedom in their form and attitude which later art does not attain. The types of face are rather round, with a certain open largeness of aspect, though the Buddha himself conforms more or less to the accepted type of tradition. Again, a pair of landscapes is preserved in Japan. Their

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authenticity is much disputed. They represent mountain scenes — tall, upright designs — with torrents plunging among rocks, and trees hanging on the steep crags. They are painted with more vigorous strokes and a less delicate brush than the characteristic landscapes of later times, and have a wild and simple nobleness of their own.

Of the famous "Death of Buddha," painted in 742, we know at least the composition, for Wu Tao-tzŭ's design was repeated by more than one early master of Japan, and the original is described in Chinese books. In the British Museum is a large painting of this subject, by the hand of a great artist of that Kosé school which was entirely modelled on the art of T'ang. Magnificent indeed is the conception. The whole of creation is wailing and lamenting around the body of Buddha, who alone lies peaceful in the midst, having entered into Nirvana, under a great tree, the leaves of which are withered where they do not cover him. Saints and disciples, kings, queens, priests and warriors, weep and beat their breasts; angels are grieving in the air; even the beasts of the field and the forest, the tiger, the panther, the horse, the elephant, show sorrow in all their limbs, rolling with moans upon the ground; and the birds cry. An ecstasy of lamentation impassions the whole work. What must have been the effect of the original?

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In the collection of Mr. Freer, of Detroit, is a picture, "The Divine Sustenance of Man," which is said to be a copy from Wu Tao-tzŭ by an artist of the Sung period. I am allowed to reproduce this picture as one of the illustrations of this book. It is a work of profound imagination and magnificent design.

The last painting of Wu Tao-tzŭ, according to legend, was a landscape, commissioned by the Emperor for one of the walls of his palace. The artist concealed the completed work with a curtain till the Emperor's arrival, then, drawing it aside, exposed his vast picture. The Emperor gazed with admiration on a marvellous scene: forests, and great mountains, and clouds in immense distances of sky, and men upon the hills, and birds in flight. "Look," said the painter; "in the cave at the foot of this mountain dwells a spirit." He clapped his hands; the door at the cave's entrance flew open. "The interior is beautiful beyond words," he continued; "permit me to show the way." So saying, he passed within; the gate closed after him; and before the astonished Emperor could speak or move, all had faded to white wall before his eyes, with not a trace of the artist's brush remaining. Wu Tao-tzŭ was seen no more.

Landscape, we must note, had by this time risen into prominence and favour. A great advance was

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made, and the style which had hitherto prevailed was abandoned.

This new movement resulted in the foundation of two distinct schools, the school of the north and the school of the south. This division into northern and southern schools has an important place in Chinese criticism of art. Fundamentally it represented a difference of race and of geographical conditions. The scenery of the great river Hoang-Ho in the north has a character of vastness and sublimity, with immense plains, and mountain ranges rising one above another. The valley of the Yang-tse in the south, with its deep gorges and rock pinnacles, is, on the other hand, romantic and picturesque. The painting of the two schools partook of the same contrast in character, which was not without a correspondence in the temperament of the races inhabiting the two regions. But the division appears to have been more than one of geography; it came to be used as descriptive of a difference of style. A painter, wherever born, could adopt whichever of the two styles was most congenial to his gift. If I rightly understand them, the school of the north aimed at vigour and spaciousness, even at the cost of ruggedness, while the school of the south sought rather in the romantic aspects of nature a response to some emotional mood. The distinction, however, has more value for the Chinese than for the European



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student of painting, especially as so little remains from which he can form a judgment. Nothing is known to us of the northern school of landscape under the T'ang dynasty from actual examples. The founder of the school was Li Ssü-hsün. When we come to the Sung dynasty we shall see that some of the greatest of the landscape painters followed his style. The founder of the southern school was Wang Wei.

Wang Wei was a physician; and he was even more famous for his poetry than for his painting. Born in 699, he spent some years in official life, after which he retired to seclusion and the cultivation of his chosen arts. He was a devout Buddhist, and died in 759.

Of Wang Wei it was said that his poems were pictures, and his pictures poems. A proverbial saying about the two arts embodies the same conception, which the Chinese regard as ideal. To interpret a mood, not to record facts, has been for them the essence of landscape painting. In the southern school this principle was sometimes carried to extravagance, for Wang Wei's art was the parent of what is known as the Literary Man's Painting, in later ages to become a paramount fashion, in which the naturalistic element was discarded for a soft and vague idealism. Wang Wei himself was criticised for combining incongruous features in one picture, such as flowers belonging

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to different seasons. He was defended on the ground that his aim was to realise the spirit, and not merely the outward form. A famous picture of his was of a banana-tree in snow, which was thought an audacious defiance of nature. But in certain districts of China, as of Japan, flowering trees blossom while snow is on the ground, and in later times the combination was a favourite subject for its rare beauty. A late copy of Wang Wei's picture has been published by Professor Hirth.\* It is a sketch in impressionist style. A water-fall, in the same broad, simple, suggestive manner, is reproduced by Mr. Tajima.† It has been traditionally ascribed to Wang Wei, but is generally thought by Japanese critics to be of later date. As to his more elaborate style we have more tangible evidence.

In the British Museum collection is a long roll, over seventeen feet long, painted almost entirely in blues and greens on the usual warm brown silk. The actual painter was the famous artist of the Yüan dynasty, Chao Mêng-fu; but, as we learn from the inscription following the signature, it is a copy of a picture by Wang Wei, and depicts the scenery of the older master's home. The copy is dated in the spring of 1309. It is one continuous landscape, in which the scenes melt into one

\* "Scraps from a Collector's Note-book," p. 76.

† "Select Relics," vol. ii.

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another. Such rolls are not meant to be exhibited or looked at all at once, but enjoyed in small portions at a time, as the painting is slowly unrolled and the part already seen rolled up again. No small mastery is requisite, as may be imagined, to contrive that wherever the spectator pauses an harmonious composition is presented. One has the sensation, as the roll unfolds, of passing through a delectable country. In the foreground water winds, narrowing and expanding, among verdant knolls and lawns, joined here and there by little wooden bridges ; and the water is fed by torrents that plunge down among pine-woods from crags of fantastic form, glowing with hues of lapis lazuli and of jade ; under towering peaks are luxuriant valleys, groves with glimpses of scattered deer, walled parks, clumps of delicate bamboo, and the distant roofs of some nestling village. Here and there is a pavilion by the water in which poet or sage sits contemplating the beauty round him. These happy and romantic scenes yield at last to promontory and reed-bed on the borders of a bay where a fisherman's boat is rocking on the swell ; and finally all melts into open sea and distant mountains beyond, lost on the large horizon. It is possible that a philosophic idea is intended to be suggested—the passage of the soul through the pleasant delights of earth to the contemplation of the infinite.

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Although I would not claim for this painting that it represents the noblest phase of Chinese landscape—we would point rather to the concentrated force and unity of the ink sketches produced in the simpler northern style, in the period of Sung—yet it has a romantic glow and beauty of its own, and it is like no other landscape art of the world.

It is to be noted that, in spite of the idealist tendencies in Wang Wei's art, the treatise he has left on the study of perspective in landscape shows that it was built on a basis of close observation of natural appearances, weather, &c.

Three hundred painters of the T'ang dynasty have left their names and the record of their work to posterity. Alas that we must be content with dreams and with regrets !

Of one other master Time has left us a glimpse. Han Kan began life as a pot-boy at an inn from which Wang Wei was wont to get flasks of wine to take with him on his country walks. Wang Wei was not always ready to pay his bill, and the boy beguiled the waiting time by drawing men and horses in the dust. The elder artist was so struck with his gift that he gave him money to study. Han Kan became a skilled portrait-painter, and produced many religious pictures also, but devoted himself especially to the painting of horses. The Emperor of the time is said to have had not less

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than forty thousand in his stables, some of which were sent to him as tribute from Western countries, and Han Kan studied them assiduously. He painted horses being trained for polo, or being exercised, or gambolling in freedom on the pastures of the plains. A famous pair of circular paintings, "The Hundred Colts," is known by a woodcut of the sixteenth century,\* and even in this imperfect translation one feels the joyous animation and life-like energy of the original, no less than the admirable mastery of the arrangement.

The British Museum possesses a painting by Han Kan which is probably genuine, and in any case is a precious record of the T'ang style. It represents a Boy-Rishi of Taoist legend riding on a goat of supernatural size, while goats and rams of small terrestrial breed gambol and frisk around. The Rishi carries over his shoulder a flowering plum-branch, on which a bird-cage hangs. We note the freedom, the nervous vigour of the strongly-outlined drawing, which the Japanese were soon to study and imitate with such enthusiasm.

Among the paintings of Han Kan was "A Yellow Horse, a Tribute from Khotan." The mention shows in what relation the kingdom of Khotan stood to China. The police notices found by Dr. Stein in the sand-buried cities of that country attest the presence of a Chinese garrison. And

\* Reproduced, Giles, pp. 56, 57.

PLATE IV  
A BOY-RISHI RIDING ON A GOAT  
BY HAN KAN  
*British Museum*









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though the paintings also found there seem so early and primitive in style, we must remember that they were contemporaneous with the grand creations of Wu Tao-tzŭ. I think, therefore, that in those paintings we may recognise a provincial survival of the primitive Asian style of outline painting from which Chinese painting was developed. And if we wish to form a conception of what Chinese painting of really primitive times was like, these Khotan pictures probably afford the best available suggestion.

But Khotan could produce, we cannot doubt, finer art than the paintings that have been found there. At any rate, one Khotan artist who flourished early in the seventh century is known to fame—Wei-ch'ih Po-chih-na. It is significant, however, that he migrated to China, where he acquired considerable reputation, especially for his pictures of "Western Peoples" and of Buddha. His son, Wei-ch'ih I-sêng, seems to have surpassed him as a painter, and was ranked among the eminent names of the T'ang dynasty. Of these artists Professor Hirth has written in his pamphlet on foreign influences in Chinese art. We cannot tell to what their "influence" amounted, though it is recorded that the Koreans founded their style on theirs, and we know that the foreign element in their work excited interest and attention.

The history of China is the history of a nation

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which is continually absorbing other races from without, and impressing on them the character of its own civilisation. China has expanded by absorbing her invaders rather than by going out to conquer : her Great Wall was built for no other purpose than to keep barbarians out ; to territorial aggrandisement, as such, she has been indifferent. In the same way Chinese art has absorbed foreign elements and influences only to give them its own powerful stamp. The natural tendency of artists is to gravitate toward the metropolis, the centre of most productive vitality within their ken ; and the attraction of China was doubtless irresistible to painters of talent arising in the kingdom of Khotan, which was itself a centre of art, but compared with China was a provincial centre.

In this connection I may mention an incident, cited by M. Blochet in an article on the origins of Persian painting, which leads us to the same conclusion.\* At the beginning of the eighth century, a prince in Turkestan having died, his brother Bilgä-Kagan sent to China for artists to build and decorate a temple in his honour. Six artists were accordingly sent from China, who made the temple and painted it with frescoes of the dead chieftain's battles. The recent discovery of frescoes at Turfan by the German expeditions shows that it is still possible to find relics of

\* *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, August 1905.

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the art of this period in Turkestan, and some of these may prove to be the work of Chinese painters.\*

In general we shall, I believe, be safe in conjecturing that a Chinese influence would be one of style, the influence of a paramount centre of teaching and tradition, while foreign influence on Chinese work would show itself rather in subject - matter, whether religious conceptions, motives of decoration, or portraiture and costumes of Western folk, as we know was the case with the two painters, father and son, who came from Khotan.

\* Professor Hirth, "Ueber fremde Einflüsse in der Chinesischen Kunst" (Munich, 1896), p. 44, quotes from a Chinese work published in 1365 some particulars on the technique pursued by the painters of Turfan.

## CHAPTER VII. EARLY PAINTING IN JAPAN

**W**HILE the ancient empire of China was thus attaining and passing its climax of power and productiveness, a new era was opening in the neighbouring islands of Japan. Nothing is certainly known about the origin of the Yamato race whom we call Japanese. What is probable is that they came as invaders from the mainland in two successive waves, represented by two distinct types among the Japanese of history and of to-day, the descendants of the later invaders being marked by delicate features, oval face, and regular proportions, those of the earlier by a more robust frame, flatter and broader face, and more plebeian features. The Yamato race has kept its original characteristics : brave and essentially warlike in character, it is distinguished by energy and thoroughness, intensity of purpose, courtesy, a passion for cleanness, neatness, and order, and extraordinary sensibility to natural beauty. This last quality of the Japanese has been fostered and intensified by the beauty of their native land. Not only are the features of those volcanic islands arresting and stimulating by their strangeness and variety,

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the sea-indented coast, the torrents, the mountains, above all the pure and peerless cone of Fujiyama, higher than Etna or Teneriffe, and as solitary, an inspiring symbol, sacred in art and poetry, hovering a distant and sublime presence in the view of half the nation; not only in form and character has a country of such scenes power over the imagination far different from lands of sleepy meadows and soft hills and wooded plains, but the atmosphere too of that ocean climate clothes the features of the rocky islands with a changing bloom of mist and colour denied to continental countries equal or superior to Japan in natural grandeur.

To these native qualities we must add an ardent patriotism. The Shinto religion, the vague original faith of Yamato, was in essence a religion of patriotism, bound up with absolute loyalty to the Emperor and faith in the divine descent of the house that has ruled Japan from legendary ages down to the present day.

Such were the original characteristics of the nation which was so profoundly to modify itself by the complete acceptance and adoption of Chinese civilisation. We who have witnessed in our day the swift and thorough absorption by Japan of the civilisation of the West see only a repetition of what happened twelve centuries before.

In the third century A.D. the Japanese became

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acquainted through books and through learned visitors from the continent with Confucianism ; but the great change came at the end of the sixth century, in the wake of the advent of Buddhism. In a few decades, almost in a few years, society was transformed. It may be that the real cause of the adoption of the Indian religion was the assurance that it had been accepted by the great empire of the continent, for Japan has ever been resolute and eager to prove herself able to acquire the best that the world could offer her ; but its adoption could not have been so fervent and enthusiastic had it not been for the zeal of a succession of notable women, who were empresses, and inspired the whole people with the fire of their own devotion. But the first impulse to the spread of the religion was due to the influence of a great man, the Crown Prince Shotoku, regent under the Empress Suiko, a man of fine intellect and of ardently religious nature, than whom among rulers few in the world's history have won a purer fame ; he is one of the company of kings like Alfred and Saint Louis.

It is with a portrait of Shotoku and two princely youths that the story of Japanese painting\* as an independent art begins. The Prince stands between

\* The paintings on the Tamamushi Tabernacle are earlier (sixth century). They are decorative and abstract in style. They are painted in oil, a medium scarcely used in later times.

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the two boy princes, wearing a cap and ceremonial robes, and with a long sword at his belt. His arms are folded, and his hands, hidden in full sleeves, hold a wand of office. The two youths are also in ceremonial dress, and with arms also folded turn their gaze in the same direction as the Crown Prince. Their hair is knotted on each side of the face with a ribbon. Japanese archæologists tell us that certain details of the costume cannot date from Shotoku's lifetime. He died in 621. But if not actually from life, the portrait must have been made soon after the Prince's death, within the seventh century. In spite of the primitive stiffness of pose, we feel as if in the presence of living persons. The different character of the two boys is finely distinguished, and the countenance of the principal figure radiates that spirituality, gentleness, power, and intellectual candour to which the story of his life bears witness. The author of this portrait is unknown; it is generally held to be the work of a Korean artist, but is quite probably the work of a native hand.

We are now on the threshold of a great era in Japanese art and history—the era known as the Nara period, from the name of the capital city of the time, just as later ages are called after the later capitals of Kyoto and Kamakura. The Nara period extends from A.D. 709 to 784. Nara, the



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capital city, with its nine gates and nine broad avenues, its spaciousness and its splendour, was itself a monument to the rapid energy by which the new civilisation was absorbed. It was especially magnificent in the number and richness of its Buddhist temples. Monasteries and nunneries were built all over the land; Buddhist prelates, attended by priests and acolytes, supervised the building of bridges, the making of roads and canals. The elaborate ceremoniousness of the Buddhist religion communicated to the court and society a taste for pomp, elaborate costume, and etiquette. The literary amusements of China were introduced: poetry became a rage; flower-festivals were instituted, when poems were hung on trees among the blossoms; dancing and music were studied with enthusiasm. It so happens that of the court life of this period we have a unique relic in the personal belongings of an emperor and empress presented after their deaths to Buddha by their daughter, and preserved in the treasure-house of the Totaiji temple to this day. There are the robes they wore, mirrors in brocade-lined cases, swords, bronze censers, lacquered chess-boards, the bamboo brushes they wrote with, laid on rests of coral, fruit dishes of white agate, golden ewers of Persian workmanship, musical instruments, and screens. In this wonderful collection of relics of Nara's luxury much is of

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foreign origin—from China, from India, or from Sassanian Persia. Native art flourished chiefly in the form of sculpture; but the sculpture of this period has never been surpassed by Japanese artists since.

Many painters there were, we know, but almost all their work has perished. The chief monument of the period in painting is the fresco in the temple of Horiuji, which was repaired or rebuilt A.D. 708–715. This is quite Indian in character, recalling the frescoes of the cave-temples of Ajantâ in its grand, strongly outlined figures and in the feeling for character and life which it reveals. There seems no doubt that it is modelled upon the Ajantâ frescoes, and this fact is eloquent and significant testimony to the freedom of intercourse then existing between India and Japan.

Two other relics of the period reveal the beginnings of a definitely Japanese style in painting. One of these is a set of six screen paintings, called "The Beauties under the Trees." These are outline-paintings, representing single figures each under a tree, with a suggestion of landscape background. The trees and the landscape are not distinguishable from Chinese work, but in the full faces of the women themselves, in the suavity and graciousness of their air, something peculiar to the buoyant and flexible Japanese genius is already disengaged—a smiling tenderness that

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yet is serious ; what Dante may have meant, addressing Virgil, *O anima cortese* ; a kind of courtesy of the soul.

The same round, full face, distinctive of Japan, the same grave sweetness, appear with heightened beauty in the second of these two precious monuments of the painting of Nara. This is reproduced somewhat crudely in the *Kokka* (No. 85), and with much greater delicacy of tone and colour in Mr. Tajima's "Select Relics" (vol. ii.). It is a "Buddhist Angel," bearing in her hand the jewel of life. This is one of those enlightened spirits, purged of human grossness, purged of the hates, the fears, and the desires of mortality, all the struggle and the suffering attendant on the individual will to live, who hover still on the brink of Nirvana, soon to attain the final blessedness, to lose the self in the eternal Oneness. Only tenderness, a divine compassion, lingers like a soft colouring on the white peace of her soul, as she moves in that calm world above the longings and the strifes of men. The dreams of Buddhism have created no more gracious figure than this, revealing as it does that side of infinite tenderness and sense of brotherhood in all life which constitutes that religion's most universal appeal.

The painting is exquisitely coloured, in tones of subdued richness. What poignant regrets must such a relic evoke when we think of all that we

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have lost of this epoch's painting! From now onward the overpowering precedent and pattern of Chinese art influence most of the art of Japan; but wherever in later times the Japanese genius frees itself, and appears in its own essence and character, we are reminded of these early paintings. Matabei in the sixteenth century, Sukenobu in the eighteenth, are of this distant ancestry.

In 794 the capital was removed from Nara to Kioto, and from this year to 1100 extends the age known as the Heian period, Heian being another name for Kioto. Throughout the later part of this era the country was ruled, through the Emperor, by the all-powerful family of Fujiwara; the first instance of that ascendancy of a clan which has been so dominant a feature of Japanese history.

From the beginning of the tenth century Japan ceased intercourse with China, and the country was closed to foreigners. The energy of the nation was now devoted to assimilating the mass of continental ideas which had poured in upon it with such overwhelming profusion. At the same time the original impulses of the race revived. Now was inaugurated a consciously national tradition in literature and in art. Classics in prose and poetry were produced; and it is remarkable that some of the most famous works were written by women. It was a woman who wrote the "Genji Monogatari,"

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“Though your lord be afar, forget not you the spring!” He is often represented, as in this portrait, holding a flowering plum-branch in his hand and wearing Chinese dress. Mr. Morrison’s painting has always been ascribed to Kanaoka, and has been for centuries in the possession of the Sugawara family. At first blush this fine, delicate, yet powerful work does not accord with what we expect of Kanaoka’s style. But nothing is more unsafe than to generalise about the style of a Chinese or Japanese artist; one never knows what manner or model they may not adopt in a particular case or for a particular purpose. Whether tradition be right or wrong in ascribing this portrait to Kanaoka, it is without any doubt a work of high antiquity—at latest, by one of the founders of the Takuma school—and, both for its great rarity and its exquisite quality as a painting, of extraordinary interest.

In questions like these there is rarely any certain test. *Stat magni nominis umbra*. Kanaoka’s greatness may in any case be securely inferred from the works of the school he founded. He lived from A.D. 850 to 890; and it is recorded of him that he painted figures, landscapes, animals, birds, and flowers. He was noted, like Han Kan, for his horses. A series of portraits of sages was painted by him for the Emperor. He was also skilled in landscape gardening, an art introduced

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from China, which was to develop with extraordinary enthusiasm and elaboration, as we shall see, in later times.

One painting which is still regarded as a work of the ninth century is a portrait of the priest Gonzo, preaching with earnest intensity shown in attitude and expression, and holding a rosary in his outstretched hand. This painting shows remarkable lifelikeness and vigorous simplicity of design. It is attributed to the hand of Kobo Daishi (774-834), the most renowned of all Japanese saints. Kobo was not only priest, but painter, sculptor, and calligraphist. He studied in China, and brought back with him the tenets of the Shingon sect of Buddhism.

But still grander and more impressive are certain Buddhist masterpieces which also still survive, and which are undoubted productions of the Kosé school, the school which takes its title from the family name of Kanaoka, and which was in fact sustained by the Kosé line for a number of generations, from Kanaoka in the ninth century to Hirotaka in the twelfth.\*

\* This is the earliest example of that noticeable phenomenon in Japanese art, the continuance of a tradition of painting in a single family. Later the Tosa and Kano families were similarly eminent. Though the practice of adoption makes hereditary talent seem more common than it actually was, yet undoubtedly in some of these families the flower of genius was continually being renewed and revived in the course of many generations.

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Such are the paintings of Samantabhadra and of Manjūsri, the god of wisdom, reproduced in colours in the *Kokka* (No. 65 and No. 109). Samantabhadra sits, as always, throned on an elephant; Manjūsri on a lion of symbolic aspect, holding in one hand a drawn sword, in the other the sacred flower. Against the dark background the forms of the Bodhisattvas, mild or severe, appear with a soft radiance, like a presence from the unknown. The fluid lines of form and drapery are of an indescribable sweetness and harmony, as if sensitive themselves with life; the colour also discloses itself as part of the calmly glowing life within, veined with fine lines of gold, not as something applied from without. Such images as these, of which this early Buddhist has created not a few, images of the infinity of wisdom and of tenderness, not only express the serenity of the spirit, but have in a degree unreached in any other art the power of including the spectator in their spiritual spell: to contemplate them is to be strangely moved, yet strangely tranquillised.

It has been contended by M. Gonse that the early religious art of Japan is nearer to its Indian prototype than anything Chinese. I think this supposition rests on little foundation. Too little remains to us of Chinese Buddhist painting for such judgments to be lightly made. And though we expect in Japanese works an added delicacy

PLATE V  
GROUP OF LAMENTING FIGURES  
FROM "THE DEATH OF BUDDHA," ATTRIBUTED TO HIROTAKA  
*British Museum*









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and sweetness, the peculiar qualities infused by Japan into the Asian tradition, yet it must not be forgotten that in the case of several of these early paintings Japanese critics are unable to decide whether they are productions of their own country or of China. Certainly nothing that we know of in Indian painting approaches the special refinement of beauty that we find in Japanese art.

Professor Hirth explains this supposed nearer affinity of Japanese with Indian Buddhist painting by the recorded fact that the Korean school of painters founded their style on that of the Khotan master already mentioned (p. 79), Wei-ch'ih I-sêng; and it is well known that Japan derived the arts of China through Korea. This evidence must not be disregarded; yet as it is certain that the art of T'ang impressed itself directly on the school of Kanaoka, and we cannot doubt that masterpieces of Wu Tao-tzŭ and his compeers and successors were familiar in Japan, the influence of the Khotan artist can assuredly not have been preponderant. M. Gonse's theory rests, I suspect, rather on *à priori* conceptions of Chinese art which were neither adequate nor just.

As I have already mentioned, the British Museum possesses a masterpiece of the Kosé school—a representation of the Nirvana of Buddha, based on the great conception of this subject by Wu Tao-tzŭ. Damaged by time and

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incense smoke as this painting is, parts of it are quite well preserved, and enable us to judge of what the whole once was. I have already, in discussing the work of Wu Tao-tzŭ, described this passionate and magnificent conception. In Anderson's catalogue of the Museum collection this picture is placed among the Chinese paintings (No. 1), and attributed to Li Lung-mien, the great religious master of the Sung dynasty. It is, however, wholly different in style from that artist's, betraying the earlier, more vigorous and impassioned style of T'ang; but that it is Japanese is proved by the manner of doing the hair in loops at the sides of the head and knotting it with a ribbon, which we noticed in the portrait of Shotoku, and by the round, full type of the women's faces, characteristic of Japan. It is, then, a production of that Kosé school which modelled itself so closely upon the T'ang art; and it has been confidently ascribed by a Japanese connoisseur of great learning and high authority, Mr. Rionin Kohitsu, to the great master Hirotaka, great-grandson of Kanaoka, and, after him, the mightiest of the Kosé line.

In later paintings of this subject, which all follow more or less the original composition, Buddha is painted entirely in gold colour, and with the appearance of a statue. Here it is a human body, wrapped in a crimson robe, and

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painted with arresting truth. And the same sense for life and nature is seen in the animals mourning in the foreground: they have none of the symbolic or heraldic convention which later painters use, but remind us in their noble realism of the lions and horses of the Assyrian friezes. The extraordinary power of the picture, apart from the conception, lies in the expressive force of line-drawing, culminating in the figure of a man who in an agony of grief flings himself backward on the ground. Some of the sorrow-convulsed faces and vehement gestures might have come from an "Entombment" by Mantegna. But the whole glows with an intense and splendid harmony of colour, cut across by the strong brush-lines; pale orange, green, and crimson, and white, and gold, and brown.

The Kosé school, as I have said, derived its inspiration directly from the Chinese masters of the T'ang dynasty, and like them pursued above all things the representation of movement and life-like vigour in a grand style.

Other schools, however, were coming into being. Takuma Tameuji in the eleventh century founded the Takuma line, which, at first an off-shoot of the Kosé school, attained an independent manner of its own, not without influence from the contemporary Sung masters of China.

More purely Japanese in character was the

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Kasuga school, founded at about the same time by Kasuga Motomitsu.

To a European eye the distinctions between these styles seem at first sight hardly perceptible, and indeed cannot easily be expressed in words. It is enough to say here that the growth of these schools implies the gradual grafting of the Japanese delicacy on the vigorous qualities of the Chinese style. By the twelfth century the Japanese character had become fully developed. The Takuma and Kasuga lines coalesced. The name Yamato or National was given to the matured style, though the title by which it was best known in later centuries derives from yet another family of painters—the Tosa line founded by Tosa Tsunetaka in the thirteenth century.

Though the surviving pictures of this earliest period are all either religious subjects or portraits (and these usually of an ideal character), yet we know from records that secular subjects and landscapes were also among the painters' themes. In fact, like Kanaoka, they followed the masters of China in range of subject as in style.

With the eleventh century, however, we shall come to the beginnings of a new kind of painting, the scrolls (*makimono*), on which were portrayed scenes of court life or scenes of war and adventure. But before quitting the Buddhist painters, we must notice a painter who stands among the most

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eminent of the religious artists of Japan. Yéshin Sozu belonged to no school in particular, and blended both Chinese and Japanese elements in his style. He was author as well as artist; his literary works were published in 150 volumes. He died in 1017, aged seventy-six.

One of the most striking things in Eastern art is the difficulty of tracing any one pictorial conception to its first origin and creator. Especially is this the case with religious art. We see for the first time what impresses us as a profound and original conception, and we say to ourselves, The mind from which this came was surely a great inventive spirit. And then we find that this work, so fresh and so immediately inspired as it seems to be, repeats with only the personal variation of the artist's style or temper an older painting by another master; and that again one yet more ancient; and so back into the mist of time. The truth is, these conceptions seem to be images that have been born out of the imagination of a race rather than moulded by any individual mind.

In the work of Yéshin Sozu, however, we find one august conception which originated in a dream or vision of the artist's own. It is told that on a mountain near Kioto the priest-painter saw one night a vision of the great and mild Buddha rising between two hills, clothed with autumnal woods; in the air beneath on either side floated two



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celestial beings, whose robes waved with the movements of their adoration ; heavenly flowers fell through the darkness and filled it with strange sweetness. This was the vision which in his ecstasy the painter saw, and as he saw it, so he painted it ; Buddha, a golden figure, greater than the hills, filling the picture with his own unearthly peace, and the angelic figures moving as if to divine melodies. Few paintings in the world surely have in deeper degree the religious sentiment of rapture and devotion.

To Yéshin also must be assigned the conception of another glorious work, the great triptych representing Amida descending with the hosts of celestial beings on a cloud that streams and wavers into the night of space behind like a scarf of glimmering gold. Mild and benignant he looks down upon the earth, while the inhabitants of Paradise play all manner of musical instruments, and perfumed petals softly fall about them. Did the painting convey no import to our minds, yet merely as a design its undulating and mysterious harmonies would affect us like a strain of solemn music. What then must have been the impression on those for whom it was painted, for whose souls, not only for whose senses, it brought the message of welcome and compassion, and attuned world-troubled hearts to the serene spaces of Paradise. Only Fra Angelico among the painters of Europe

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has this beauty of devotion, this intensity of tenderness.

Though such noble art was perfected in the Heian period, the history of Japanese life, so far as it centred in the capital and the court, was a history of strange and exquisite corruption. The ferment of religious enthusiasm was subsiding into superstition and the study of magic, into elaboration of paralysing ritual and the pullulation of mythologies. Effeminacy was the fashion. Men used rouge and powder; they gave way to gusts of hysteric passion and to floods of tears. Ministers of State disowned their functions; it is recorded of one that he devoted every day of nineteen years to the practice of kicking a football. The armour in fashion had become so elaborate and heavy that in the hour of crisis the Captain of the Guard found himself unable to move a step, and the commander-in-chief could not mount his horse. Writing verses, drawing on fans, burning various kinds of incense, and improvising poems on the scented fumes, hawking, football (in a less violent version of the game than our own); these were the only serious occupations. When a pet cat had kittens, a court lady was officially appointed to nurse it. Life was loaded with ceremony, and elaborate decorum masked an entire indifference to morality. As high and strict a canon prevailed in all that belonged to manners and accomplish-

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ments as in mere conduct it was relaxed and loose. To a successful costume, to a happily turned couplet, all merely moral offences were forgiven. We are reminded now of Rome under late emperors, now of Provence and the Troubadours.

Of life in the palace at this period we get a glimpse in the scroll-paintings of Takayoshi. In these, as in all the subsequent scrolls of the Yamato school, certain definite conventions are adopted. Interiors are represented not as on a level with the eye, but below it; we look down, as if from the ceiling, on rooms divided by gorgeous screens and on the figures within, equally gorgeous in their stiffly ornate costume. Ladies of fashion would wear twenty dresses, one over the other, the edge only of each under-garment showing, in a series of narrow borders of skilfully harmonised colour; their black hair was unbound and trailed in a long cascade over the shoulders, much admired if it fell to the feet. Their faces, that disown expression, look small and mask-like, the apex of a pyramid of dress. Human bodies seem instruments for the propping up of the costumier's rich work of art rather than wearing clothes for the use of moving limbs. The painter, too, was enthusiastically conventional. In representing a garden, he chose a few flowers and trees, and, painting them with exquisite delicacy, made them symbols of nature's luxuriance. Clouds

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and mist were introduced, quite for arbitrary reasons of composition, as solid bands of gold with perfectly definite outline. A strange and sumptuous art, far removed from Chinese impressionism, as indeed it was in essence purely Japanese. And though we may be inclined to be contemptuous of such painting, let us admit that in delicacy of workmanship as in gorgeous harmony of colour it has its impressive qualities. The principles of design which this style inaugurates persist through Japanese art, wherever it reverts to native tradition. Korin's flowers, Hokusai's clouds, are treated in the same spirit. In the frank use of straight line and angle, which play so little part in the fluid rhythms and curves of Chinese design, we find something symptomatic of the Japanese character, which lends a certain strength of order and decision to a too refined, voluptuous, and secluded art. And soon this style and tradition were to be taken up and transfigured into virile life. For the days of the Fujiwara, and the indolent court of Kioto, with all its fantastic and coloured solemnity, were passing away. Impatient hands knocked at the door; armed and resolute actors appear upon the scene.

## CHAPTER VIII. JAPANESE PAINTING IN THE KAMAKURA EPOCH OF THE CIVIL WARS

**W**E enter an age of battle and bloodshed. While the court at Kioto was daily more sunk in its childish and forgetful pleasures, the provincial families were acquiring strength, taking into their own hands the powers dropped from an enervated rule, and viewed with increasing contempt the effeminate corruption of the capital.

At the opening of the twelfth century military power was concentrated in two great clans, the Taira and the Minamoto. The Taira at first, under a strong chieftain, Kiyomori, a man without fear as without scruple or feeling, had the predominance. But the struggle was fierce and continuous. The two factions contended for the guardianship of the Emperor's person; for the Emperor, though his sacred dynasty was never deposed and he was still treated with a figment of veneration, was without real power; there were times when he was driven to fly in feminine disguise. At last the Minamoto began to gain the upper hand. They owed a series of successes to their chieftain Yoritomo, one of the great and formidable

## KAMAKURA EPOCH OF CIVIL WARS

figures in Japanese history, and to the generalship and devotion of his younger brother, the hero Yoshitsune. At the final battle of Dannoura, on the coast, the forces of the Taira were utterly destroyed. In later Japanese art pictures of Yoshitsune in his ship, haunted by the ghosts of his slain enemies, who rise in their hundreds from the sea with threatening and accusing gestures, the very foam of the waves, as they break on the ship's bows, forming into pale clutches of spectral fingers, show how deep the remembrance of that day of drowning and slaughter had burned into the imagination of the race.

Yoshitsune's brilliant captaincy and triumph earned him not gratitude but jealousy and hatred from the elder brother in whose cause he had fought. Yoritomo plotted against him, and set spies to take his life. Yoshitsune escaped in disguise to the north of Japan with a few trusted companions, chief among them the giant Benkei, whom as a youth he had defeated in a famous combat, and who ever after served him with passionate devotion. Pictures and colour-prints endlessly celebrate the deeds and adventures of these heroes, the darlings of Japanese story. The brave and chivalrous Yoshitsune died fighting, or as some say by his own hand, the victim of his brother's hatred.

Yoritomo became absolute in power, though he

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made no attempt to depose the Mikado from his nominal sovereignty. He established his capital at Kamakura, which grew speedily into a great city. In 1192 he forced from the unwilling court the concession to himself of the title of Shogun, "Great General." The title has become historic. Henceforward, down to 1868, when the Shogunate was at last abolished, Japan had two masters: the Mikado, supreme in name and sacrosanct in person, but without power; and the Shogun, nominally deriving his office and authority from the sovereign, but in reality treating that sovereign as a puppet and exercising himself an armed supremacy. The Shoguns ruled; but their line was not continuous like that of the Mikados; revolutions were accomplished, ruling houses overthrown, and successive dynasties of Shoguns were set up.

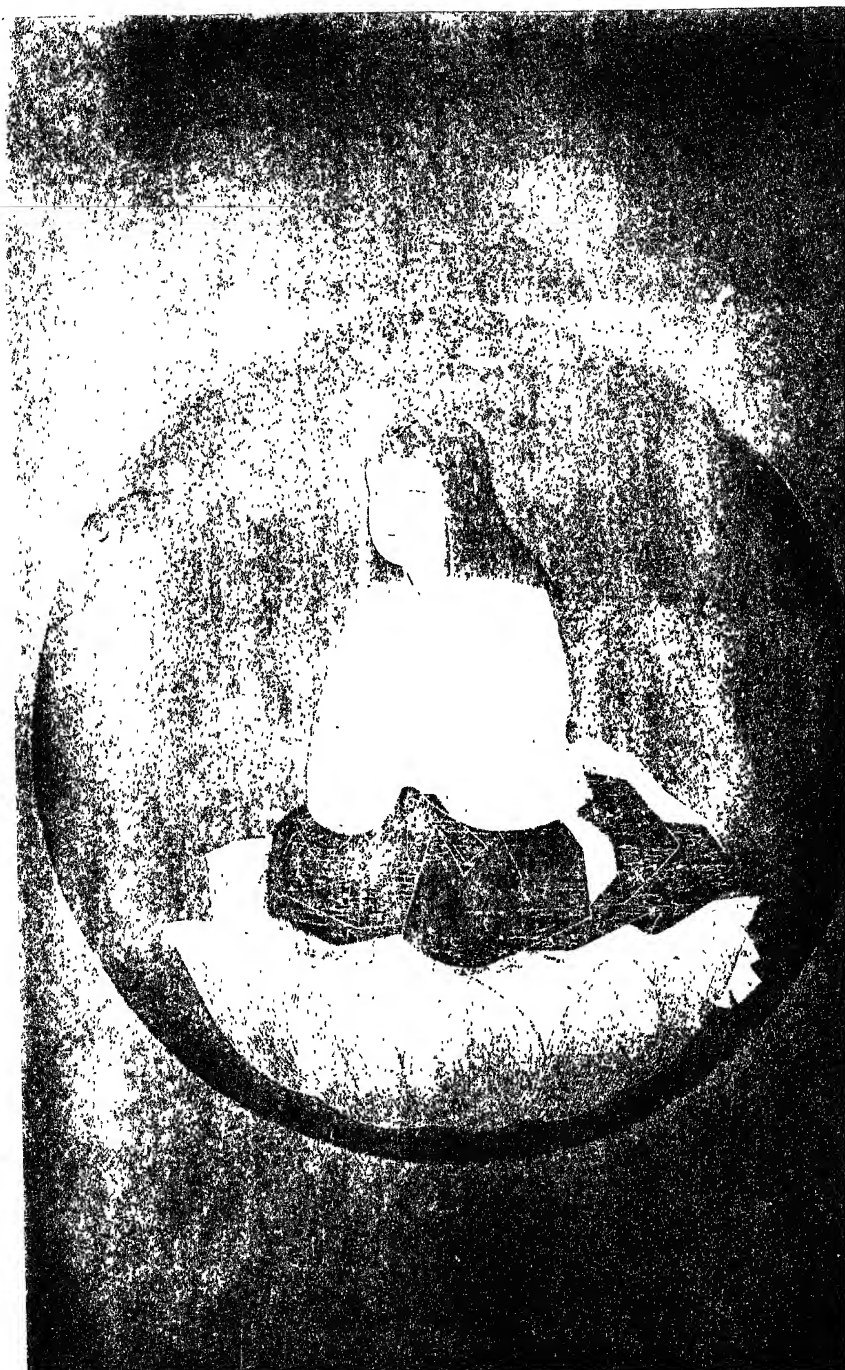
Strong ruler as Yoritomo was, his own house of Minamoto had but a brief spell of power. In the next generation his family lost its supremacy, and another family, the Hojo, took its place. It was during the Hojo rule, in 1274, that Japan was threatened, for the first and only time in her history, with foreign invasion. The great Mongol conqueror, Kublai Khan, despatched an armada to subjugate the Island Empire. But, as with Elizabeth's England, the winds and the waters fought against the invader, and a tremen-

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PLATE VI  
PORTRAIT OF KOBO DAISHI AS A CHILD  
BY NOBUZANE  
*From the "Kokka"*









## KAMAKURA EPOCH OF CIVIL WARS

dous tempest sank the ships of the great Khan. Yet relief from this overwhelming danger brought no peace. Japan remained torn and distracted till in 1333, after fierce bloodshed and convulsions, the rule of the Hojo was destroyed, and a new house, the Ashikaga, came to power. Strange to say, it was in this time of desperate and incessant battle that, as Mr. Y. Okakura has pointed out,\* Buddhism in its deeper sense became finally rooted in its hold on the Japanese spirit. It was as a spiritual discipline that it appealed, a discipline which by steady contemplation of death and all possible disaster, confronting every man at such a time whether he would or no, could lift the spirit above change and calamity, and enable it to meet fate smiling and unsubdued. Like Christianity, Buddhism in its progress over the world developed many diverse characters and assumed a variety of forms. Penetrated severally with the predominant importance of some one aspect or interpretation of the original doctrine, numerous sects came into being. The sect of Shingon or the True Word had been supreme in the Heian epoch; but the mysticism of that sect, with its emphasis on the pronouncing of sacred charms, was peculiarly liable to the degeneration which popular belief in magic helped on. But during the Kamakura epoch another sect took hold

\* "The Japanese Spirit," p. 78.

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on the Japanese, the Dyâna or Zen sect of "abstract contemplation." The characteristic doctrines of this sect inculcated a high indifference to the changes and chances of the world; they bred in its votaries a stoical fortitude and self-control. Hence its appeal to the warrior natures of Japan, an appeal strengthened by the Zen indifference to book-learning, and reliance on personal intercourse and elementary symbolism. Incalculable has been the influence of the Zen teaching in the moulding of the Japanese character, bearing fruit, as we ourselves have seen, to-day. Charity, patience, energy, contemplation, the wisdom and sweetness that ripen from self-conquest; these were the paramount virtues instilled into the Samurai, the warrior class whose actions fill this epoch with a keen air of daring and devotion. The brutality of war was ennobled by a religious inspiration; to suffer and to die for others was the Samurai's ideal. Not seldom do we read of famous warriors shaving their heads and retiring from the world; some even wore a priestly robe over their armour. We are reminded of our own Crusaders. And indeed I think we can understand this age of Japanese history better if we recall what conditions were brought about when the Norman race had assimilated, with Christianity, the arts and civilisation of the South. The Normans,

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## KAMAKURA EPOCH OF CIVIL WARS

like the Yamato warriors, were high of spirit, supremely energetic, strong of will. In great characters like William the Conqueror we find the same combination of consummate foresight with unscrupulous force that we find in Yoritomo, the creator of the Shogunate; the love of art and poetry, the religious devotion, the adventurous deeds, the extravagant chivalry of the Norman knight have all their parallel in the Kamakura Samurai. The life of each has its darker side. In Captain Brinkley's great work we read of cruelties, vices, and effeminacies among the knights of Japan, reminding us vividly enough of the courts and camps of our own Norman kings.

Before the rival houses of Taira and Minamoto had joined in their long conflict, a painter had arisen whose spirited brush was destined to recreate the native school of art. This was a Buddhist priest, named Kakuyu, who rose to be a bishop and in 1138 archbishop in the Buddhist Church. He is famous in art under the name of Toba Sojo, his official title. He died in 1140. Though a bishop, he was a man of the rarest geniality, with a genius for fun and playful malice. His name is popularly associated with the invention of caricature. The comic style of drawing is called after him Tobayé, and he has left some scrolls filled with drawings

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of frolicking animals, satirising the ways of the Buddhist monks and clergy.

Frogs, monkeys, and hares are made to travesty the ritual of the priests and the devotions of pilgrims, whether in mere light-heartedness or in condemnation of clerical perfunctoriness and slothful ways I do not know. Fresh, diverting, and amazingly modern as these drawings are, they are not the whole of Toba Sojo's achievement. He painted solemn subjects like the Nirvana of Buddha. But his great importance in the history of his country's art is his invention of dramatic painting. It was Toba Sojo who inaugurated the style of swift and vigorous figure-drawing applied to scenes of actual life, which answered to the high and gay spirit of the Japanese race. Nothing in Chinese art afforded a parallel or pattern for the amazing life and energy which he and his successors show in handling crowds of figures. In one of Toba Sojo's scrolls, devoted to the life of a famous priest, a crowd of people witnesses a miracle, the bodily uplifting of a building into the sky. How swiftly and how powerfully he seizes the varying expressions of the people: the frenzy of wonder, the grimace of stupefaction, the exultation of the devout !

The same gift in perhaps even greater force appears in the scroll-paintings of the next

## KAMAKURA EPOCH OF CIVIL WARS

great master of the period, Mitsunaga. A son of the ancient and potent house of Fujiwara, Mitsunaga enjoyed immense fame in his lifetime. He received a commission from the Emperor in 1173, but almost nothing is known of his career.

A typical scene from Mitsunaga's brush is reproduced in the *Kokka*, No. 182. The gate of the palace has been set on fire, and before it stands a hesitating and alarmed multitude, paralysed by the spectacle of the rushing and swirling flames, which are fastening on the woodwork and scatter burning splinters at their feet. Divided counsels possess them: some would be running, but the flames bewitch them; others give commands, which no one hears. Their bodies are alive with movement or tense inaction; their very hands talk, their faces grin with excitement.

A native critic, Mr. Sei-ichi Taki, has chosen this painting of Mitsunaga's to illustrate\* an essential characteristic of Japanese painting: the tendency to find its subject not in a single central object, but in the mutual relation of figures or objects. Stress is laid not on forms but on ideas. The criticism is a subtle and suggestive one. For though in European art we are accustomed to compositions with numerous and crowded

\* The *Kokka*, No. 182.



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figures, it is certainly the exception for these figures not to be grouped in convergence on one central figure or group. This convergence obeys the instinct for unity which is inherent in all artistic creation. In these dramatic scenes of Japanese painting the unity is not formal and obvious, may appear even to be lacking; but the same principle of a mutual relation conceived of as the unifying factor is to be found also in the Japanese designs of flowers and birds. In fact, we must recognise that at bottom it is landscape which controls the type of Japanese, as of Chinese, painting. Figures and groups are treated as parts of a landscape might be treated. We are dealing with an art which differs from European art, as we have said before, in the absence of that concentrated attention on the human form which is at the core of Western painting.

Yet in drawing the figure, what could be more expressive of the capacities of the body for movement, force, and animation than the brush of Mitsunaga? Those who know the pen drawings of Rembrandt will recognise a kindred power in Mitsunaga of creating the living, acting, suffering presence of human beings by a few summary strokes. True, there is a certain trace of the calligraphic element in the Japanese master which is entirely absent in the Dutchman; this

## KAMAKURA EPOCH OF CIVIL WARS

and the sense of suppleness, alertness, and fire in the brush-line ally Mitsunaga's drawing to that of Leonardo. Yet, on the other hand, the profound and pervading Italian sense for ideal beauty of form that lives in every sketch of Leonardo's is alien to the art of Mitsunaga, who, like Rembrandt, accepts humanity in all its various common types.

In another scroll of Mitsunaga's we have pages from the contemporary life of the court, which illustrate in their way the over-refined, exhausted temperaments produced by the times. So in an odd scene we see a neurotic patient lying in bed, while creatures of his feverish dream, little gnome-like figures, troop in to visit him.

But the tremendous imaginative power of the painter is best seen in the scroll which portrays the terrors of hell. Here are nude figures, almost unknown in Japanese art (though treated finely by some of the Ukiyoyé masters in their colour-prints), treated with extraordinary expressiveness and force of line.

With Toba Sojo and Mitsunaga may be ranked two other masters who stand pre-eminent above the artists of the period, Keion and Nobuzane.

Like Mitsunaga, Nobuzane belonged to the noble Fujiwara clan. He was equally renowned for his poetry and for his painting, and his

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portraits of poets are among the pictures attributed most securely to his hand. He was born in 1177, and lived to 1265. Among the works which tradition calls by his name are *makimono* of court life, following the conventions of Takayoshi's design, but adding the vigour and expressiveness of drawing which Toba Sojo had introduced. And with this Nobuzane united the glow of a subdued but splendid colouring, which no artist of his race has surpassed; strange harmonies of deep lapis-lazuli and orange, and opaque green, fawn colour, black, and gold.

In his portraits he used lighter tones; they are drawings rather than paintings. They show an intimate sense of character. Mr. Morrison owns one of these portraits. The British Museum has a Buddhist picture attributed by a high native authority to his brush, noble in colour and exquisite in workmanship. But the crown of Nobuzane's achievement, one of the supreme classics of Japanese art, is the ideal portrait of the famous priest and saint, Kobo, represented as a boy kneeling on a lotus dais, with hands joined in prayer. Here we are far from any Indian symbolism such as for our eyes mars with its monstrous features, however disguised and subdued, so much of Buddhist painting in China and Japan. It is the sim-

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plicity of direct vision, as if the poet-painter were actually transcribing on the warm brown silk the definite features of a vividly remembered dream, which has created this pure image. Without material surroundings, set on the symbolic lotus, sacred in Eastern art as the flower which from mud and ooze rises to unfold unsullied blossoms on the peaceful water, type of the soul aspiring from the muddy passions of gross nature, the figure of the young saint might have been a merely hieratic form. But Nobuzane's profound feeling has filled it with a real humanity that has power to touch us: its innocence is not mere ignorance, deriving charm and pathos from our knowledge that it is soon to be destroyed, it is a positive purity of the spirit that we feel will endure beyond experience. In Reynolds's "Infant Samuel" it is the charm of a child's sweet docility and trust that informs the sentiment of the picture. But Nobuzane lifts us into a rarer, a severer atmosphere. In the young face is foreknowledge:

O meek anticipant of that sure pain  
Whose sureness grey-haired scholars hardly learn !

What mood, we may ask, is his?

Some exile's, mindful how the past was glad ?  
Some angel's, in an alien planet born ?

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Not these; for though there is the gravity of foreknowledge, there is also the intensity of a pure will; there is, in Dante's deep and haunting phrase, the "beginning of peace." The world, as Nobuzane symbolises in the enclosing circle and in the emptiness of background and surrounding—the world has fallen away, does not exist, for that isolation, in which prayer is a state even more than an act of the soul.

As a painting this picture is of strange beauty, with its unfretted simplicity of design, its delicacy of drawing, its imaginative colour. And its beauty is of a different type from that of Chinese painting, as it is still more different from that of European painting. It is a new, rare flower in the world's art.

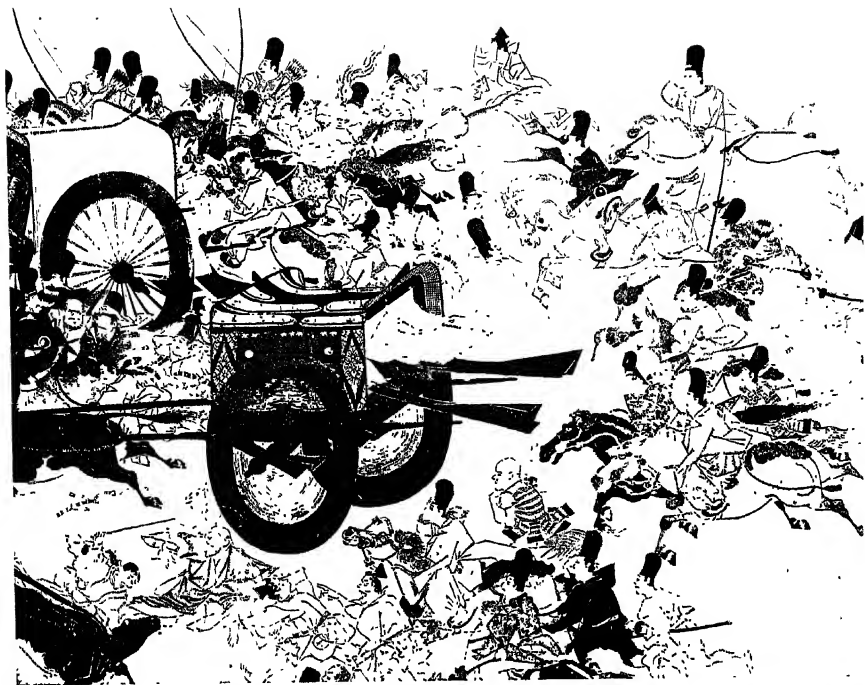
We pass from Nobuzane to the fourth great master of the period: Keion. The existence of this artist has been denied, I do not know upon what grounds. He is said to have flourished in the thirteenth century, and to have been attached to the Suniyoshi shrine.

In any case, there exist three famous *maki-mono*, two of which are in private possession in Japan, while the third is in the Boston Museum. They are by a single artist, and it is with him, whether his name be Keion or another, that we have to deal. They depict scenes of the civil war, when the strife between Taira and

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PLATE VII  
SCENES OF CIVIL WAR  
TWO PORTIONS FROM A SCROLL-PAINTING BY KEION  
*Boston Museum*









## KAMAKURA EPOCH OF CIVIL WARS

Minamoto raged. Never surely has the excitement of movement and action been portrayed with such amazing energy as in some of these splendid scrolls.

In his own way Keion is the greatest of Japanese draughtsmen. At a time Kiyomori, the Taira chief, was absent from Kioto, the Minamoto invaded the court and set the palace on fire, hoping to seize in their turn the sacred person of the Emperor. Disguised as a woman, the Emperor was smuggled into an ox-cart. Keion has painted the scene, when a group of armed Minamoto, arriving in the courtyard, surround the ox-cart: one holds up a smoking torch, others roughly pull aside the curtains of the hood and exclaim with disappointed anger at finding only a woman. The men are alive: we can hear the stamp of their feet; we can see their swift and menacing gestures. But the full measure of Keion's power is seen rather in another scene from the Boston scroll, the "Flight of the Court." What a fury of fear, what a riot of speed, in the headlong flight of the men, in the mad race of the ox-carts, some of which are overturned in the wild onrush! Could even Rubens have given us a more overwhelming impression of energy and despair, of terror and of tumult?

Toba Sojo, Mitsunaga, Keion, Nobuzane: these

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are the greatest masters of their period and of the whole Yamato school. But they are the greatest among a host. Korehisa approaches Keion in the fierce vigour of his battle scenes: there is more than one copy from a famous scroll of his in the British Museum collection; Takakane rivals Nobuzane as a colourist; he is a master of strong harmonies of lapis blue and vermillion, white and gold, and green, a summary and decisive draughtsman. And these are only a few among many pre-eminent names. This is one of the greatest periods of Japanese painting, one in which there is no influence of Chinese ideals. Yet to Europe it is practically unknown. With the exception of the one Keion scroll at Boston, all of these masterpieces are in Japan, in the hands of noble families, in collections that no traveller sees. It was inevitable that M. Gonse should have passed them over, for at the time when he wrote his book there was no means for a student, unless provided with most unusual influence and facilities in Japan itself, of knowing of their existence, except from native books. It was inevitable too that Dr. Anderson should depreciate the whole school, which he judged chiefly by later, degenerate works and by copies. Indeed, it is only by the wonderful reproductions published in Japan that students are now able to realise how

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glorious and how significant a period this was, and to understand why Japanese connoisseurs prize the master works of the early Yamato painters above all other paintings of their country.

With the end of the fourteenth century the school began to decline; and though great painters of the Tosa line arose in this and the succeeding century, there was soon to come a strong reaction in the form of a renaissance from China. A new era in art was at hand, with a different ideal and a totally different style; and the masters of this new era derived their inspiration from the works produced in China, while Japan was absorbed in her own national problems and internal struggles, under the dynasty of Sung. It is to China that we must now return.

## CHAPTER IX. THE SUNG PERIOD IN CHINA

**I**N a lecture delivered at Oxford, which has never, I think, been reprinted, Matthew Arnold discussed the Modern Element in Literature. He took for illustration the contrast between the words with which Thucydides opens his history and the words with which Sir Walter Raleigh opens his. The Athenian, he points out, has the modern tone, the modern conception of history, while to the Elizabethan the world is still a theatre of romance, where fact and fable are admitted on equal terms.

What, in effect, do we imply by this word modern? We mean, I think, by a modern age, an age in which the interests of the race have passed beyond dependence on the struggle for existence; in which the mind is free, has found a clue to life, and can disinterestedly review and estimate the forces operating outside itself; in which the state of society has emerged from a state of warfare, such as the wearing of weapons implies, to a state of civility and amenity.

The age of Sung has this modern character, if we are to judge it by the art it has left.

We left China at the opening of the tenth

## THE SUNG PERIOD IN CHINA

century. The T'ang dynasty fell in 907. Between that time and the establishment of the House of Sung there is a short period of fifty years, in which five brief dynasties rose and fell; a period of trouble and unrest. Of the art of that period we know little. The most famous of its painters was Huang Ch'üan, whom the Japanese call Osen. A precious relic of his art is in the British Museum. It is a pair of pictures of fowls and flowering mallows, a hen and chickens on one, a cock on the other. The two form a masterpiece of delicate realism and lovely colour, the brush-line temperate and quiet, yet sensitive and alive. But of the art of the period as a whole we can form no very definite opinion, though the delicate fineness of style which these paintings show is said to have been a characteristic of the period, in reaction from the largeness and vigour of T'ang.

The Sung dynasty reigned from 960 to 1280; three centuries of splendour for art and literature, though of gradually waning power for the empire, owing to Tartar encroachments from the north.

Whoever wishes to obtain some conception of the external aspect of Chinese life at this period cannot do better than read Marco Polo's description of the Sung capital, Hang-chow, upon the Ch'ien-t'ang river; a city even then,

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when its heyday was over, "beyond dispute the finest and the noblest in the world." He tells of the vast compass of the city; of its canals and twelve thousand stone bridges; of its twelve guilds of handicrafts, with their many thousands of workmen each; of the merchant princes, who lived "nicely and delicately as kings," and those "most dainty and angelical creatures" their wives; of the great lake, some thirty miles in circuit, within the city, its shores studded with palaces, abbeys, and churches, and on each of its two islands a vast mansion royally furnished, free for the use of any citizen who desired to give a wedding-feast or other entertainment; of the numerous police; of the three hundred public baths of hot water; of the ten principal markets, filled with stores of fresh fish, vegetables, and magnificent fruit; of the throngs of house-boats and barges on the lake, and of carriages in the streets. The citizens, Marco tells us, were of peaceful character, neither wearing arms nor keeping them in their houses. You heard no noisy feuds or dissensions of any kind among them. Their goodwill and friendliness was not confined to their dealings with their own countrymen; they were equally cordial to foreigners, entertaining them "in the most winning manner," and giving them help and advice in their business. In the palace grounds of the

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Emperor were delectable gardens, shady with fruit trees, cool with fountains, a demesne enclosed by ten miles of battlemented wall; and in the many spacious halls of the palace itself were paintings on a gold ground of beasts and birds, warriors and fair ladies, and marvellous histories.

Would that the Venetian, so curious of manners and customs, so observant of facts, had found means to tell us of the inner life, the animating thoughts of the poets, philosophers, and artists, which informed so splendid and mature a civilisation! It is true that when Marco Polo came to China the Sung dynasty was at end; but in Hang-chow and the south the soldiers of the conquering Mongol were no more than a garrison, hated by the inhabitants, and the glory of Sung had not yet wholly departed. Had he questioned "the idolaters," as he terms them, he might have transmitted to us Platonic discourses from the votaries of Zen, that sect which in the Sung era came to inspire and give significance to so much of its art and literature, and, as we have already seen, passed on to even greater power in Japan.

As Wu Tao-tzŭ to the age of T'ang, so is Li Lung-mien to the age of Sung: great in all branches of art, but of especial originality and power in his religious paintings. He is renowned in Japan as Ri-riu-min. He served for thirty years in official posts, but whenever he could



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get a holiday he would take a flask of wine, we are told, and go out into the woods, and spend the day on some rocky seat beside a running stream.

Painting was a passion with him; even in old age when racked with rheumatism he would make as if he drew upon the bed-clothes with his crippled hand. In his youth he was famous for his pictures of horses, and would spend hours watching the horses in the Imperial stables. A Buddhist priest even rebuked him for this preoccupation, and warned him that in his next metempsychosis he might find himself in a horse's body. His later years were devoted to the religious masterpieces on which his fame chiefly rests. In 1100 he retired to the Hill of the Sleeping Dragon, from which he took his fancy name Lung-mien (his real name being Li Kung-lin), and died there six years later.

Among this master's greatest works was a vast painting of the "Five Hundred Disciples of Sakyamuni." He painted several notable pictures of Kwanyin, the Goddess of Mercy, and seems to have been the first to portray her seated on a rock, as she is depicted so often in later times by the Japanese. One master of Japan, to whom we shall come shortly, Cho Densu, founded his style largely on that of Li Lung-mien, and from his works

PLATE VIII  
AN ARHAT WITH A LION

BY LI LUNG-MIEN

*Freer Collection, Detroit*







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we can understand the general character of the art of his prototype. But original paintings exist. Two pictures of Arhats, reproduced in the *Kokka* (Nos. 20 and 41), are attributed to his brush. These are certainly worthy of his fame. They are works of great majesty, in which the force of the T'ang style is subdued and sweetened by the research for harmony of rhythmic line; the kind of change we experience in passing from a Signorelli to a Raphael; though the figures of the Arhats retain, in spite of the suavity of the artist's brush, a super-human grandeur and impressiveness. These pictures are remarkable for original and noble colour. But Li Lung-mien's work was mostly in monochrome. Of several of his scroll-pictures copies exist. The British Museum has two from a painting of the "Sixteen Arhats crossing the Sea to Paradise," the original of which must obviously have been of strange beauty. In the same collection are two variant copies derived from another original scroll, which represented a curious subject: Demons attacking the bowl in which Buddha had placed the demon-mother's favourite child. The Musée Guimet in Paris has published another copy of the same work.\* There are two pictures of Arhats in the British Museum which Anderson described in his cata-

\* "Annales du Musée Guimet. Bibliothèque d'Art."

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logue as the work of Cho Densu (Nos. 1 and 2), but which are really Chinese and of the school of Li Lung-mien. A scroll-painting which claims, with some reason, to be an original is in the possession of Dr. Bone of Düsseldorf, who has published portions of it, with an essay, in the magazine devoted to Asiatic lore called *T'oung Pao*.\* A number of paintings from the Daitokuji Temple, Tokio, ascribed to the master or his school, are now in the Boston Museum. The splendid example here reproduced is in the Freer collection.

Magnificent mastery of a design built up of rhythms of fluid line betokens in the art of Li Lung-mien an era of climax and culmination. But we must beware, in this as in other cases, of attributing to this great painter a single character of style. While the two pictures of Arhats which I have mentioned incline us to conceive of him as absorbed in the creation of monumental images, intense in the expression of concentrated thought yet serene in their grandeur, we find him in other moods capable of playful humour and drawing the activities of demons with a dramatic vivacity almost rivalling that of Toba Sojo and Mitsunaga. Still it is as the builder of noble harmonies that we think of him above all. His influence on religious art was very great. Other pictures of Arhats in their

\* *T'oung Pao*, Série ii. vol. viii. No. 2.

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hermit rocky haunts seated in contemplative ecstasy are among the masterpieces of Sung art (see the *Kokka*, No. 154).

But the special genius of the period is seen rather in landscape and in subjects allied to landscape, the pictures of birds and of flowers.

We have seen how even in the fourth century, though landscape art was in a primitive stage, it was a passion with the Chinese to escape from the city, its irksome conventions, its noise and dust, to forest, hill, and stream. The mysticism and the legends of Taoism gave to this native instinct a sort of religious colour, which Buddhism, with its monasteries always built in mountain solitudes, further deepened. The romantic feeling for nature (escape from actuality being of the essence of romance) developed with the Sung age into a more intimate emotion, such as we do not find paralleled in Europe till the coming of Wordsworth. The peculiar mode of thought which tinges the verse of the English poet is indeed thoroughly congenial to the poets and the artists of Sung. Them too the mountains "haunted like a passion." But instead of being part of a single writer's idiosyncrasy, the conception of nature was a permeating thought of the age, explicit in the doctrine of contemplation taught by the Zen sect. Under the reign of



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Sung this doctrine found, as I have said, its first great manifestation in art.

Kuo Hsi, one of the greatest of all Chinese landscape painters, published an essay on landscape, in which we find side by side with the passionate feeling for nature a Confucian strain of thought. Though we may long, he says, to yield to our instinct and fly from cities to the woods and wilds, to the hills and the musical streams in which the soul of man delights, yet we ought not to disown society. Here is the boon of the painter's art, that in the midst of care and toil it can liberate the mind and bring it into the august presence of nature. Liberation was indeed the keynote of this Sung art. It loved the "far-off effect." Kuo Hsi in his essay insists on this as necessary to unity. The painter must have varied experience, must build on incessant observation, he says, but above all things he must seize essentials and discard the trivial. He lays stress on the rendering of aerial phenomena and effects of gradual distance. The result of such researches produced a divorce between the hitherto associated arts of painting and calligraphy. The Sung landscape is built up of tones rather than of lines, though even now there is no attempt to suggest the solidity of objects otherwise than by forcible silhouette. The artists worked

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almost entirely in monochrome; and they chose for subject all that is most elemental and august in nature, visions of peace or storm among the great peaks and immense distances of the mountains, plunging torrents, trembling reed-beds, moonrises over promontory and sea, the wild geese flying in the autumn sky, the willow loosening the soft streamers of its foliage to the warm winds of spring.

The method of presentation was what we now call impressionism. But we must distinguish between the impressionism of the East and the impressionism of Europe. In Europe the theory at least of impressionism is based on scientific fact. Our eyes, it is argued, are not capable of seeing any given scene in all its detail at once; they are focussed on a single point of sight; and in order to render the whole field of vision in equally elaborate detail, as it is rendered in the Pre-Raphaelite pictures, the eye must travel from one point to another. It was characteristic of nineteenth-century Europe to appeal to the authority of science rather than to the artistic principle of unity. No such appeal was in the minds of the Chinese painters. Their method was the natural outcome of the conception of landscape as a means of expression for the artist's mood or emotion. Nothing matters but what concerns our own minds. In ourselves is

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the true reality. In the life of things the artist sought to illuminate and to realise his own soul.

In later times this strong bent of idealism brought about degeneration. But the Sung artists had not discarded the study of nature nor the inheritance of swift and strong draughtsmanship with the brush bequeathed by the T'ang masters; their art was finely balanced; and so it comes about that their pictures of landscape, birds, and flowers appeal to our eyes as marvels of vigorous and delicate naturalism, though we shall be far from understanding their whole import or true inspiration if we regard them as nature studies merely.

Landscape painting, however popular, we in Europe feel to belong to a category of less rank and importance than figure painting. This is not merely a prejudice; for, according to our Western conceptions, that type of art is the greatest which, *ceteris paribus*, commands the fullest scope and is capable of widest range. Landscape in our view is less significant to humanity.

The Greeks divided poetry into epic, dramatic, lyric, and elegiac. Of these types the two former rank higher because they contain more; they present life more adequately to its reality, richness, and variety. And we demand of the epic poet and the dramatist that his conceptions should accord with

PLATE IX  
PINES AND ROCKY PEAKS

BY MA YÜAN

*Collection of Baron Yanosuke Iwasaki, Tokio*

*From Tajima's "Select Relics"*







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the main conceptions of life inherent in his race. For the lyric or elegiac poet it is enough if he express with power and sincerity a view of life quite personal to himself. In the domain of painting, landscape may be compared to lyric or elegy. The materials of landscape lend themselves more easily than any other materials to the control of an artist's mood; they accept the impress of his feeling more readily.

Turner alone of European landscape painters could give his themes a wider mental horizon and what we may call the epic tone; but this was by the choice of themes in which national sentiment could be expressed or reflected, or scenes of sea and mountain made the actual theatre of momentous events.

The landscape art of China and Japan abstains from such interests; and yet it has sources of vitality which have a nearly equivalent effect.

Just as in Chinese life, nourished by Confucian ideals, the constructive lines of the social order were, so to speak, vertical—the tie of father to son and son to father being stronger than the tie of husband to wife—so in art a similar principle of continuity prevailed. The same subjects were treated again and again. In Europe this happened also, so long as the Church or the State demanded the treatment by artists of subjects answering to national or universal



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aspirations. But landscape subjects have never been so demanded, and the landscape art of Europe has no such standing themes as have provided masterpieces of religious or mythological painting. In China it was different. Many are the advantages for an artist bred to such traditions.

It is a great gain for him that his subject belongs to his race, and therefore to mankind. It partakes of the universal; it has been sifted by the choice of many generations; it has struck root in the imagination of a people; and so at once he is set in touch with the mind of his public, and can play upon a hundred associations and indefinable emotions. Again, he has to work within certain limits, and an artist is helped by limitations. For while they free him from the burdensome necessity of choosing among the vast and bewildering spectacle of the world, they concentrate his powers. The very fact that others, great and famous masters, have approached the same theme and handled it in their own way, inspires him with emulations, moves him with the necessity and the desire to make the subject his own—in a word, tests his originality far more severely, and, if he is successful, disengages it far more effectively than if he had set out on a road of his own with the deliberate quest of novelty. Thus successively refined upon, fed and refreshed continually by new life, the depth

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of a subject is proved, and the varying new conceptions it evokes are like flowers upon an ancient tree.

Wisely, then, did the old Chinese painters maintain this perpetual challenge of traditional subject, even in landscape. The most conspicuous example is the group of eight views of Hsiao and Hsiang, eight scenes about the shores of Lake Tung-t'ing. But "views" is really too topographical a word. Here is a list of the subjects :

The Evening Bell from a Distant Temple.

Sunset Glow over a Fishing Village.

Fine Weather after Storm at a Lonely Mountain Town.

Homeward-bound Boats off a Distant Coast.

The Autumn Moon over Lake Tung-t'ing.

Wild Geese on a Sandy Plain.

Night Rain in Hsiao-Hsiang.

These subjects are associated with the four seasons. And "Flowers of the Four Seasons" form another favourite set of subjects, generally landscapes. The Four Accomplishments, Writing Poetry, Playing Music, Drinking Tea, and Playing Checkers, provide motives for sets of pictures in which we find happy sages in their mountain retreats, figures in great landscapes. Add to this the constant association of certain flowers with certain trees and certain animals, of

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the flight of the wild geese with autumn, of the willow with the spring, to name but obvious instances, and we see how immense a part order and tradition play in Chinese landscape. And this tradition was, at least while Chinese art remained vigorous, neither dead nor paralysing. For how free, after all, it left the individual artist, while at the same time it linked him with the common life of his countrymen, whose love of nature had been crystallised and consecrated for long generations in chosen themes.

This infinite linking of associations, these hundred sympathies, give to Chinese landscape a cohesion, a solidarity, a human interest which prove an animating power and remove it far from triviality and shallowness. Contrast the tendency in Europe which drives painters to Holland or Spain, to Hungary or Morocco, in search of something new in local colour to stimulate the jaded interest of a mostly indifferent public!

The great subjects of all art and poetry are commonplaces. Life, Love, Death; these come to all of us, but to each one with a special revelation. It is by the new and original treatment—original, because profoundly felt—of matter that is fundamentally familiar, that great art comes into being.

Let us consider one of these traditional subjects

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in an existing example: "The Evening Bell from a Distant Temple," by Mu Ch'i. A range of mountains lifts its rugged outline in the twilight, the summits accentuated and distinct against the pale sky, the lower parts lost in mist, among which woods emerge or melt along the uneven slopes. Somewhere among those woods, on high ground, the curved roof of a temple is visible. It is just that silent hour when travellers say to themselves, "The day is done," and to their ears comes from the distance the expected sound of the evening bell. The subject is essentially the same as that which the poetic genius of Jean François Millet conceived in the twilight of Barbizon, at the hour when the Angelus sounds over the plain from the distant church of Chailly. Well might such a subject become traditional in Europe. Yet our foolish and petty misconceptions of originality would cause all the critics to exclaim against any painter who took up the theme again as a trespasser on Millet's property.

Each of these works, the twelfth-century Chinese painting and the nineteenth-century French painting, is thoroughly characteristic of its continent. In the European picture human figures occupy the foreground, and in their attitude is concentrated the emotion which pervades the picture. The Chinese painter, on the other hand, uses

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no figures; for him the spectator supplies what Millet places in his foreground. He relies on a hint, a suggestion which the spectator must himself complete.

What a public for a painter, one cannot help exclaiming, when the artist could count on his work meeting with minds so prepared, so receptive! To what a prevalence of taste and imagination in the society of the day the very slightness of the Sung landscapes, which many will think a fault of insufficiency, bears witness.

Mu Ch'i (Mokkei in Japanese) was a Buddhist priest, whose work was thought capricious and unpleasing by Chinese critics of his day, but who is regarded as one of the greatest painters by the Japanese. The taste of the two countries does not always coincide. It is probable that most of Mu Ch'i's paintings are in Japan. He was certainly a great master of monochrome, but is less celebrated for landscape than for his wild geese, storks, monkeys, and Buddhist figures. Mr. Arthur Morrison possesses a tiger by him, with a wild background of torrent and tossing branches, which is splendidly conceived.

Besides Kuo Hsi, already mentioned, whose work seems almost unknown, Hsia Kuei and Ma Yüan, famous in Japan as Kakei and Bayen, are the pre-eminent landscape masters of Sung. All three belonged to the Northern school, and

PLATE X  
THE PEASANT RETURNING HOME

BY CHAO TA-NIEN

*Arthur Morrison Collection*

This traditional subject was treated by many of  
the Sung masters, notably by Li Ti









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their work has the Northern vigour, combined with that wonderful delicacy and sensitiveness which marked the true Sung style. The Emperor Hui Tsung (Kiso Kotei) is not unworthy to be ranked with these. Loftiness and simplicity, a deep feeling for solitary places, give their character to the art of these masters; the Chinese term for landscape, "mountain and water picture," indicates the elements of which it was habitually composed. Austere at times, with a sense of desolation in bare peak and blasted pine, yet often bathed in the mood of a serene and silent joy, the joy of the mountain-dweller gazing out on vast spaces of moon-flooded night, their art is never trivial, never pretty. The early landscape of Europe, conceived as a fair setting to the deeds of men and women, the earth a garden with soft verdure for their feet, trees to shade them, and rivers to refresh them, mountains on a blue horizon to repose their eyes upon; neither this, nor that sentiment of ownership associated with topography in which the independent art of landscape in Europe had its root, has any reflection in the painting of Sung. Yet we find now and then decided tendencies towards realism, always with an element of poetic choice, in such pictures as Li Ti's "Peasant returning Home,"\* with its leafless oak, a picture Ruysdael would

\* The *Kokka*, No. 71.

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have admired ; or Ma Lin's "Fisherman on a Wintry River,"\* with its vivid impression of December's bareness and the rustling of frozen sedge. And in Chao Ta-nien's "Lake in Winter,"† of which I am often reminded in passing St. James's Park on a misty morning, with its delicately outlined willow-boughs, its moor-fowl on the water, the bands of vapour stealing across the trees, and birds flocking through the dim haze, we find much of that intimacy of feeling which charms us in a Corot. Do I exaggerate in speaking of the age which produced such things, over which there seems for us no veil of intervening time, as an age of modern character?

It cannot but be noticed that in the landscape art we are considering there is no marked preference for what is sunny and comfortable, nor, on the other hand, for what is savage and forbidding. We may say of these painters, as Walter Pater said of Wordsworth, "They raise physical nature to the level of human thought, giving it thereby a mystic power and expression ; they subdue man to the level of nature, but give him therewith a certain breadth and vastness and solemnity." To many spirits of the nineteenth century in Europe the Sung painting would have seemed, had they known it, the very expression

\* The *Kokka*, No. 162.

† *Ibid.*, No. 41.

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of their own minds : \* that is why it is of such living interest to us now.

In the Sung period the system of competitive examination had become by long use frigid and academic. The great economic reformer, Wang An-shih, introduced into the system a more flexible spirit, testing character, and bringing it more into relation with the reality of life. Wang An-shih, though no professional poet, has left a little poem, the sense of which is as follows : It is midnight ; all is silent in the house ; the water-clock has stopped. But I am unable to sleep because of the beauty of the trembling shapes of the spring flowers, thrown by the moon upon the blind.

In this little poem we get vividly expressed the old Chinese feeling for the beauty of flowers. I know not where in European literature or art we shall find a parallel to this peculiar poignancy of impression, this extreme sensitiveness. It is not merely voluptuous eye-pleasure ; it is not the feeling of Keats's lover who seeks narcotic joy by glutting his sorrow

On the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,  
Or on the wealth of globèd peonies.

Nor is it the sheer overpowering of the senses

\* Compare such sayings as that of Amiel : " Every landscape is, as it were, a state of the soul."

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It is just two or three blossoms and opening buds on a leafy stalk, but it trembles in leaf and petal to the air as the wind blows and bends the stems upon its root unseen. The spacing is perfect, the colour beautiful; but when we have said, "This is fine colour and design," we are still outside the secret of the picture: and I cannot find any words to describe the peculiar emotion it produces, though I know it is different from that which any European flower painting evokes, deeper and rarer. Before a masterpiece in this kind by Fantin Latour we feel that the flowers have been taken from field or garden to be grouped before us, a feast for the eye; but the Chinese artist brings us to the flower, that we may contemplate it and take from it into our souls something of the beauty of life which neither sows nor spins. That which Li Ti felt in painting his picture still emanates from it, eluding words.

Lou Kuan has painted rose mallows (the *Kokka*, No. 84) reflected in water. A bloom hangs into the picture from above, and a faint image of it colours the running water below, hinting at far more than we see. The Chinese say of poetry, "The sound stops short, the

presented to one of our sovereigns by a Chinese emperor, and was placed in Kensington Gardens, but I have had no leisure to verify this information.

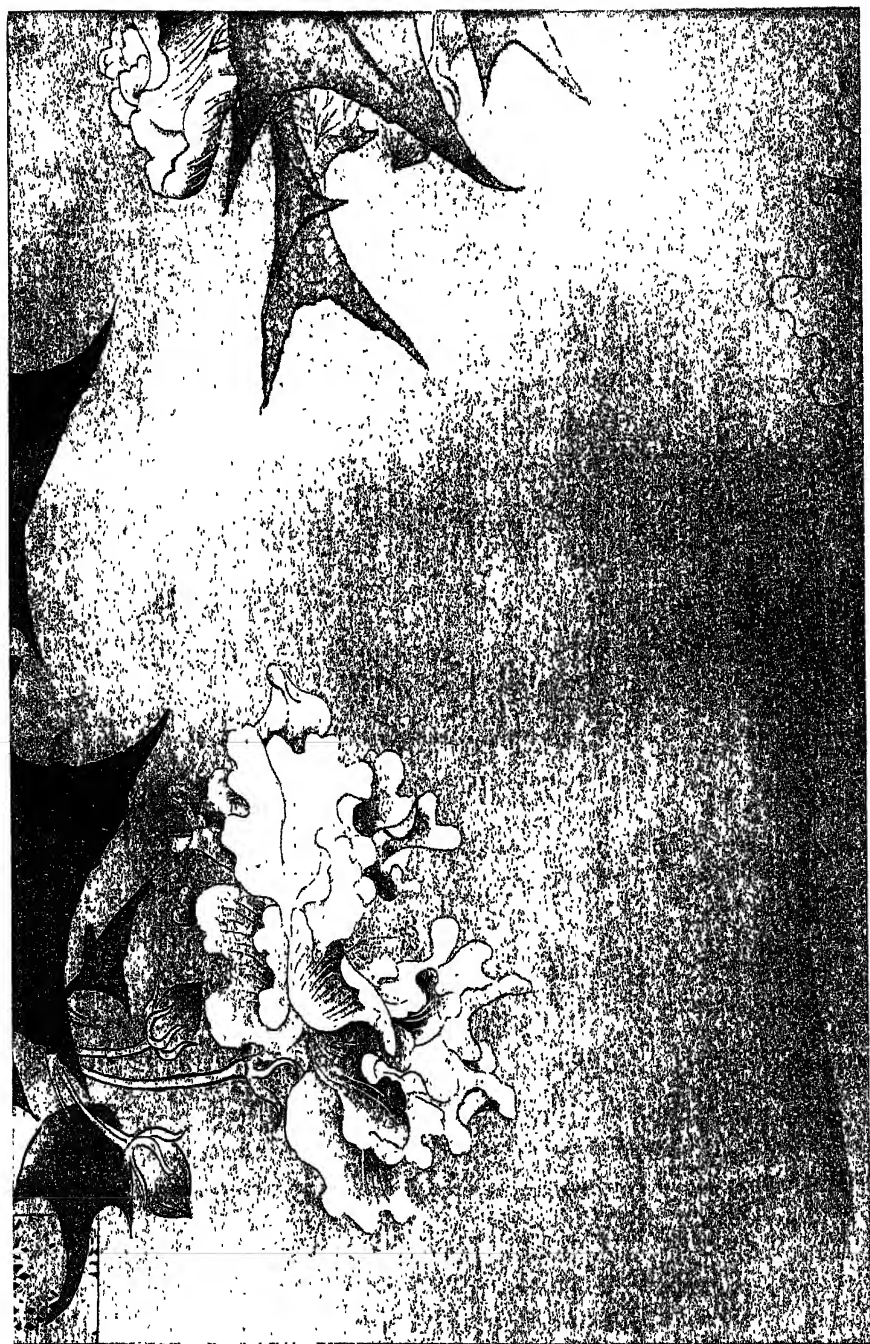
PLATE XI

ROSE MALLOWS OVERHANGING A STREAM

By LOU KUAN

*From the "Kokka"*









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sense flows on"; and the same principle is in this painting.

Flowers, Moon, Snow; these three beauties of earth and air have a peculiar glory and consecration in the art of the Far East.

A Japanese friend of mine told me that when he was in Paris he woke one morning to find that snow had fallen in the night. As a matter of course, he took his way to the Bois de Boulogne to admire the beauty of the snow upon the trees. What was his astonishment when, with his friend, another Japanese, he arrived in the Bois, to find it totally solitary and deserted! The two companions paid their vows to beauty in the whiteness and the stillness, and at last beheld in the distance two other figures approaching. They were comforted. "We are not quite alone," they said to themselves. There were at least two other "just men" in that city of the indifferent and the blind. The figures drew nearer. They also were Japanese!

We in Europe are not blind to the beauty of the snow

And the radiant shapes of frost,

but certainly we are far from having that kind of religious feeling which prompts the Japanese to go out and contemplate its freshly fallen splendour. We do not regard it as visible

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manifestation of beauty, the apparition of a power from the unseen, at whose coming it behoves them to be present. I am not sure that we are not more conscious of the inconveniences of a snowfall than of its loveliness.

It was in China, in the Sung age, that this attitude of mind I speak of first found mature expression. There is no longer any element of dread or discomfort in the Sung artists' and poets' feeling for wild nature, storms and rain and snow; nothing of the horror of mountains which survived till nearly a century ago in cultivated Europeans. The life of nature and of all non-human things is regarded in itself; its character contemplated and its beauty cherished for its own sake, not for its use and service in the life of man. There is no infusion of human sentiment into the pictures of birds and beasts, of the tiger roaring in the solitudes, of the hawk and eagle on the rocky crag; rarely is there any touch of the sportsman's interest which has inspired most European pictures of this kind. If an artist painted a bird with such emotions as were Shelley's when he wrote his "Skylark" we should have something comparable to the Sung painting, though different. These men painted birds and flowers as they were in nature, with no explicit symbolism, with nothing factitious added, and yet the inspiring thought, the sensitive

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feeling, that was in their minds as they worked  
has wrought its effect and still finds a response in  
the minds of those who understand.

To see the world in a grain of sand  
And a heaven in a wild flower.

The words of our own Blake crystallise more aptly  
than any language of mine what was at the heart  
of the poet-painters of Sung.

## CHAPTER X. THE MONGOL EMPIRE: PAINTING IN TIBET AND PERSIA

**C**HINA, during the reign of the House of Sung, suffered continual pressure from the encroaching Tartars of the north. Two rival Tartar dynasties in succession held sway over her northern territories, and the later of these was contesting power with the weakened Sung empire of the south, when a new and mightier force arose in the Mongolian conquerors, who swept southward from the regions now known as the Transbaikal provinces of Russia, and, first overthrowing the Nü-chên Tartars, at last put an end to the House of Sung.

In 1264, Kublai Khan fixed his capital at Peking. Kublai was no mere barbarian: the arts and literature flourished under his wise rule. The Mongols, like other conquerors, went to school with those whom they conquered, and became absorbed into Chinese civilisation. The new dynasty, Yüan, as it is called, lasted a little over a century.

Of Chao Mêng-fu, the greatest painter of this period, I have already said something in describing his copy of a landscape by Wang Wei, now in the British Museum. Born in 1254, he retired

## PAINTING IN TIBET AND PERSIA

into private life on the final downfall of the House of Sung, from the founder of which he was himself descended; but in 1286 he was summoned to court, and became a favourite of the Mongol Emperor. The landscape roll just mentioned is dated 1309.

Chao Mêng-fu, known to the Japanese as Cho-su-go, was famous for his horses. They rivalled those of Han Kan. A famous picture of his was the "Eight Horses in the Park of Kublai Khan," a version of which is in the collection of Mr. George Veitch. It is a scroll painting; and the horses are seen disporting themselves in freedom on the grassy slopes of the park, down which a stream comes tumbling over rocks; one of them is rolling on the grass. Two fragments of a similar painting are in the Louvre, in the Musée de l'Extrême-Orient, there described as copies, though of such fine workmanship that they might well be thought originals. But of this master's art as a whole we can form no adequate opinion, as his work seems to be of the greatest rarity.

Of the whole period, indeed, though it continued the art of Sung with but little diminution of glory, but scattered fragments are left to us.

A painter of individual style, known and appreciated, like Mu Ch'i, more in Japan than

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in his own country, is Yen Hui (Ganki in Japanese). He painted chiefly figures from Taoist and Buddhist legend. Two examples are in the British Museum. In one, a large picture, three hermit sages sit together in a recess of the mountains. The other shows us Li T'ieh-kuai, the Taoist wizard of the hills, breathing out his spiritual essence toward the sacred mount of the Immortals. He is represented as a beggar with ragged garments and gourd hanging at his girdle of oak leaves; one hand grasps a crutch, the other props his chin, and his eyes look out from the picture under his black matted hair with the smile of a magician. Li T'ieh-kuai and his brother wizard-sage, who made a great toad his companion, were favourite subjects of Yen Hui's brush.

In both these pictures there is, together with a romantic strangeness, an extraordinary intensity of life, expressed through brushwork of great nervous force. The freedom and wildness of the genius of Taoism could not be concentrated into more striking images.

In the *Kokka* (No. 66) is the coloured reproduction of a portrait of an emperor by Ch'ien Shun-chü. It is the whole-length figure in profile of a gentle youth, who appears to be placing a sheath upon his finger-nail. He wears a cap, and a long rope, hiding the feet, of a dull rose-

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PLATE XII

THE HERMIT WIZARD LI TIEH-KUAI BREATHING  
OUT HIS SPIRITUAL ESSENCE

BY YEN HUI

*British Museum*

1









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colour, with a girdle of blue, in which a flute is stuck. If we compare this portrait with one of the figures of the Ku K'ai-chih roll, we are conscious of a loss of vitality in the bounding-line which must play an all-important part in the work of this simplicity of convention. Yet it is a painting both of beauty and of naturalness. Some will be reminded by it of the profile portraits painted in endless number by the miniature painters of Persia. These have a similar delicacy of line and colour. But their poses are formal; they have not the intimacy of the Chinese portrait, in which the royal youth seems entirely unconscious of a spectator. The design, too, of the Persian painters is small; it lacks the simple largeness of Ch'ien Shun-chü.

Kublai Khan was a devoted Buddhist. But the form of Buddhism which he adopted as the state religion of China was a form which had acquired its distinctive character in Tibet and was called Lamaism.

In the seventh century the Emperor of Tibet was converted to Buddhism by his two wives, one a princess of China, the other a princess of Nepal. In the native religion the worship of demons and the practice of magic predominated; and it was not long before the countless Tibetan deities were incorporated into the new religion, in the guise of defenders of the Buddhist Church.

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The Lamas were an order of priestly exorcists, and a priest-kingship was established in the country by Kublai, which lasts to this day, though the title of Dalai Lama dates from a seventeenth-century usurper.

Tibetan painting, at which we may here briefly glance, reflects the monstrous and lurid features of the Lamaist religion. How much of its technical character is due to Chinese example we do not know, but the influence was doubtless considerable, and in early times Peking was probably the centre of Lamaist art. The specimens which have been brought to Europe from Tibet in recent years are mostly of the last two or three centuries. But a hieratic style of painting, as we know from Byzantine art, keeps a fixed character, and it is difficult to date these paintings with any certainty. Mr. Morse, of Evanston, Illinois, will soon, I believe, publish his special studies of the subject, and further enlighten those who are interested in this strange page of religious art.

The Tibetan pictures I have seen vary little in type so far as technique is concerned. They are painted on a kind of canvas, in body-colour, often on a black ground. The drawing of the finest examples is vigorous and rhythmical, the colour glowing and rich. Yet in neither respect are they comparable with the classic painting of

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China. Moreover, for the most part the subjects, though impressive from fantastic power of imaginative treatment, are in essence savage and horrible. Flames writhe and twist in backgrounds of gloom; rivers turn to blood at the approaching presence of infernal goddesses; the Eight Demons trample on human victims; fire-wreathed fiends drink from human skulls; the green boar, the blue bull, the white elephant crush miserable mortals under them. The atmosphere of torment and terror is relieved at times by brief glimpses of fair, verdant landscape; single passages, individual figures, may be found that have grace or beauty, but the general impression left is that of terrible and obscene nightmares in a burning gloom. When the subjects are milder the art, if more agreeable, is as a rule less forcible and interesting. A good deal of later Lamaistic painting, light in tone, rather gay in colour, rather coarse in handling, seems to have no independent character, and may be classed merely as provincial Chinese art.

From this epoch also dates the origin of Persian painting, as we know it in the beautiful miniatures of the Middle Ages.

The conquest of Persia by the armies of Genghis and Kublai Khan set up once more a quickened current of communication between the

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east and west of Asia. And the succeeding conquests of Tamerlane at the end of the fourteenth century provoked yet further a stimulating intercourse and fusion of ideas, in spite of all the havoc and slaughter which they caused. Under the successors of Tamerlane a flourishing school of art arose in the heart of Asia, at Samarcand.

I have already quoted from the learned article\* in which M. Blochet has collected very interesting evidence on the origins of Persian painting. We have seen how in the eighth century the princes of Turkestan sent to China for their artists. Later we find a Persian astronomer having a porcelain tower brought piecemeal from China at enormous expense and erected at the gates of Samarcand. It was afterwards destroyed by barbarian raiders. In Samarcand and in Herat arose the schools of miniature painters whom the Persians took as their models. M. Blochet's researches all go to prove that the mediæval painting of Persia has its roots not in Persia itself, but in the countries beyond the Oxus. And this is confirmed by the miniatures themselves.

In the paintings in a Persian manuscript†

\* *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, August 1905. See above, p. 80.

† Brought to my notice by Mr. A. G. Ellis. The manuscript is a history of Genghis Khan and his family.

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belonging to the Royal Asiatic Society, dating from the fourteenth century, Mongol types and fashion of drapery, and a certain reminiscence of the Chinese manner of drawing, are manifestly visible. This is the earliest specimen I have seen. It is only rarely, indeed, that miniatures in European collections can be assigned to a date so early as the fifteenth century.\* Now it is noticeable that the farther back one goes, certain characteristics tend to assert themselves. Colour, which is the paramount quality in the later paintings, is often restricted to a few discreet touches of red and blue; the work is mainly in outline, and this outline in the finest specimens has a calligraphic sweep, a rhythmical beauty, which betrays an affinity to the art of China.

Could we recover the lost productions of the school of Samarcand we should doubtless recognise in them a special and in the main independent development of the primitive Central Asian type of painting. As it is, we must build on inferences. Persian painting abounds in portraits of notable people, repeated and copied again and again. Among these is the portrait of a striking personage, variations of which are

\* A magnificent manuscript, with many miniatures by Bihzad, Mirak, and other artists, has quite recently been acquired by the British Museum. It is dated 1496.



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to be seen in many collections: the Louvre has one; M. Raymond Koechlin in Paris and Mr. C. H. Read in London each possess a version; and another, I think the finest I have seen, has recently been discovered by Mr. Firth in the Bodleian. There are doubtless very many others. The portrait is of a man in the prime of life, stout of frame, robust in aspect, with a face expressive of the utmost energy and command, the dark eyes alert, piercing, and resolute under the folds of the turban. There is something formidable in the whole air of the man; there are both cruelty and humour in the curves of his lips. He squats upon one heel; at his back is a quiver of arrows. But what strikes one as singular in the portrait is the left arm, which is thrust in a sort of triangular frame of vine-wood hanging round the neck. Some have supposed this to be the portrait of a captive warrior with his arm imprisoned. But if so, why is he armed; why this expression of self-confidence and command? Above all, why these numerous versions of the same portrait? The natural inference is that this is the likeness of some greatly celebrated man, the demand for which would produce countless repetitions. Now under the Oxford portrait, and I believe others too, is written the name Timour; and in the lack of contrary evidence, we may be content to

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accept this traditional designation, and believe this portrait to present the actual features of the famous and terrible Tamerlane, wearing his paralysed arm in a primitive kind of sling. If so, we may be sure that the versions mentioned derive from a lost original of the Central Asian school. The style of the line-drawing, with its few touches of colour, attests its early origin.

But painting as it was developed in Persia and took on an independent Persian character has for its chief attraction an exquisite charm of colour. Design becomes weaker, less coherent and unified, and in later periods, especially in the Indo-Persian miniatures produced at Delhi, decorative convention tends to usurp vitality and expressiveness of drawing; even the colouring at last loses quality, and coarsens. But there is abundance of painting of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and even of the eighteenth centuries, which is remarkable for sensitive delicacy of drawing no less than for singular beauty of colour, heightened and enriched by the exquisite mountings. Want of creative ideas, apparent in the narrow range of subject and the endless and servile repetitions, accounts for the general languor of design contrasting strongly with the painting of China. Yet Persian painting will often refresh us by its naive and unstudied design; it repeats itself as

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craftsmen do, with pleasure; it is saved from the coldness of academic formula. If it is less central and significant than Chinese painting, and if we may fancy Wu Tao-tzŭ, had he lived later, speaking of it in much the same terms that Michaelangelo uses of Flemish art, we may also find in it the same sort of exhilarating contrast, after too much of the later academic painting of China, that we find in Altdorfer or Memling after too much Pontormo or Parmegiano. So we do not soon tire of the monotony of subject: of these endless portraits, where the painter rarely ventures beyond a profile, of bearded princes, supremely conscious of sovereignty, and of young men with the hair just sprouting on lips and chin, arrogantly beckoning; of studious youths, holding in one hand a book, in the other a narcissus flower or a carnation; of those saints and sages, reclining solitary under trees by smoothly flowing water, or on some terrace looking out on a vague and tranquil plain, in a luxury of meditation; of philosophers disputing; of ascetics in the mountains, surrounded by birds and beasts; of princes in gorgeous apparel, on white-caparisoned horses, riding, hawk on wrist, through landscapes of enchanted twilight; of hunters pursuing the timid antelopes, shooting arrows as they gallop—one bends down from his saddle and has caught a flying deer by the

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neck in his bow-string; of lovers in gardens, alone among perfumed flowers. Such are the themes on which the Persian painters play with little variation. Now and again are scenes of action, assaults on tall towers, or skirmishes of lancers; but rarely is there any seizure of the dramatic moment.

The scope of this volume precludes anything but a glimpse at this fascinating chapter of Asian painting. Persian literature is, I believe, remarkably lacking in references to art; hence, probably, the vagueness of the knowledge about Persian painting in Europe. Authorities on the subject are to seek. I have wished here merely to indicate the kind of relation in which, so far as we can ascertain, Persian painting stands to the art of Asia in general. It is certain that in its origin at least it allies itself with the east of that continent, and, in spite of its nearness to Europe, escaped what might have been a natural influence in the art of Greece and Byzantium; a fact M. Blochet explains by the hereditary enmity of Greece and Persia. Still it seems likely that in later times something may have been got from Europe; and Mr. C. S. Ricketts, who owns some very beautiful Persian miniatures, has made the interesting suggestion that the residence of Gentile Bellini at Constantinople and the admiration of his work in the Nearer East may have

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contributed something effectual to the practice of the Persian schools ; certainly one finds Persian drawings which one might well believe to have been modelled on the fine pen-work of Gentile.

Persian painting dies away in India. It had never anything like the national importance and esteem that the same art held in China ; it had neither the vigorous free growth of Chinese painting, nor its capacity for rising to impassioned loftiness as an expression of thought and religious ideals. It is far less central and significant. But its luxurious day-dream holds us with a peculiar spell.

PLATE XIII  
SHOKI, THE DEMON-QUELLER

BY CHO DENSU

*Arthur Morrison Collection*

A vigorous example of the artist's style in secular subjects









## CHAPTER XI. THE ASHIKAGA PERIOD IN JAPAN

**W**E saw how the arts in Japan came into existence by contact with the fertilising civilisation of China; how in the eighth century a national style had been formed in painting, grafting, we may infer from the very few examples that survive, on the traditions of the continent the Japanese quality of delicacy, buoyancy, and sweetness; how a great school of sculpture had been established, surpassing anything of the kind that is known to us in China; how in the ninth century a new wave of direct influence from the masters of the T'ang dynasty bore on its crest the great achievement of Kanaoka; how the Kosé line which Kanaoka founded sent out branches which developed more purely Japanese art in the Kasuga and Tosa schools; how in the twelfth century Toba Sojo inaugurated the virile and dramatic painting, saturated with Japanese character, which Mitsunaga and Keion carried to a climax, and which was continued by a host of powerful draughtsmen and splendid colourists through the fourteenth century; how finally the Tosa school began to fail, and a new revival from China rose into predominance.

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From 1335 to 1573 extends the period of Japanese history known as the Ashikaga period. The power of the Hojo family, which had succeeded the Minamoto in the Shogunate, was destroyed by Takauji, the founder of the Ashikaga line. He removed the capital from Kamakura and restored it to Kioto.

Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, third of the line, was a contemporary of the first Ming emperor, and under his rule there was intimate communication with the empire of the continent. Yet it was not from the contemporary Ming painting, but from the classic art of Sung that the Ashikaga style took all its inspiration. Now, instead of the gorgeous coloured scroll, instead of the representation of ceremonious manners or heroic action, Japanese painters turned with that whole-hearted fervour and intensity which is in the character of their race, to the bold and simple ink-sketch of landscape, birds, and flowers. The Zen doctrine, which had been a pervading influence in the active life of the Kamakura warriors, had ripened on the philosophic side in the contemplative retirement of the monasteries, and now flowered afresh as an æsthetic inspiration. Nearly all of the Ashikaga painters were priests or monks.

This Chinese Renaissance in Japanese art coincided nearly in date with the Renaissance in Italian

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painting. The close of the fifteenth century found it in full flood. But its beginnings were of earlier date. Nen Kao, who died in 1345, produced ink-sketches of sages in the genial temper and with the rapid freedom of Mu Ch'i. Gukei and Tesshiu were others who still in the fourteenth century anticipated the coming revival of the Sung style.

But the greatest of these precursors of the Chinese Renaissance is famous less for his monochrome paintings than for his pictures in colour, founded closely on the grand religious art of Li Lung-mien, whom the Japanese call Ri-riu-min. This is Cho Densu, known also as Meicho or Mincho. Born in 1351, he died in 1427. He was a priest, and has been compared to Fra Angelico for his union of art and devotion. In this respect, however, he was only one of a host of painters. It is recorded that his absorption in painting drew on him a rebuke from his superior. He is famous as the painter of Arhats.

But the summit of his art is to be found rather in the portrait of Shoichi Kokushi (Tajima, "Select Relics," vol. vi.), a masterpiece of portraiture, of colour, and of design. The aged priest, with wrinkled austere features—how like some portrait by Ghirlandajo!—sits in a high chair over which a great cloth of green and white pattern has been thrown. The tip of his long staff

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resting on the chair makes a single note of red in the picture.

Here Cho Densu shows himself a master of the Japanese style. But the most of his work is thoroughly Chinese in spirit as in manner. A beautiful example is in the British Museum; a hermit saint with a lion (oddly recalling pictures of St. Jerome in the desert) meditating beside a waterfall in his mountain solitude.\* Even finer than this is a picture reproduced in the *Kokka* of Kwannon, the Goddess of Loving-kindness, of whom a Buddhist text says that he who prays to her, even though his soul be in fire, shall feel the flames turn into a fountain of fresh water. She sits, a majestic figure, beside the fountain which ripples past her feet, while a votary kneels on the brink of the healing stream.

Cho Densu also practised the ink-sketch. And here I must guard the reader against a misconception which has received some support in Europe. Dr. Anderson has classified certain painters as forming the Buddhist school. But there is really no such thing. "School" in Japanese means a traditional style. An artist of any one school could work, if he chose, and in later periods often did work, in the style of a

\* This repeats the design with little variation of the painting by Li Lung-mien in the Freer collection, reproduced in this book.

PLATE XIV  
JUROJIN

By SESSHIU

*From the "Kokka"*









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different school. The Buddhist picture (*butsu-gwa*) was richly coloured, with lavish use of gold. But I doubt if any Japanese artist painted Buddhist pictures and nothing else. The misconception has arisen simply because the temples have preserved religious paintings of the early schools, while all the secular pictures which are known to have been produced by Kanaoka and other masters have perished.

The Buddhist picture was painted alike by Cho Densu and by the fifteenth-century masters of the Tosa school, though the style of each in secular subjects was totally different. The great period of the Tosa school was coming to an end; Mitsunobu retained much of the power and all the rich colouring of the earlier epoch; Yukihide was a worthy rival. But before the fifteenth century was turned a galaxy of artists had arisen, all working in the Chinese manner, all followers of the free style of Sung: the Tosas were outshone, and their work disesteemed.

An impetus came from the outside. Josetsu, a Chinese painter, settled in Japan and attracted followers. Famous among these is Shiubun, a priest, who is regarded as the founder of what is called the Chinese school of Japan. His work is very rare. Native critics praise his landscapes for their "lofty tone," their mildness and serenity. Pre-eminent among his pupils are Oguri Sotan, especially famous for his pictures of hawks and

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eagles; Soga Jasōku, a painter of austere sages and grand landscapes; and No-ami, poet, critic, and courtier, renowned for his paintings of tigers. The son of No-ami, Gei-ami, and his grandson, So-ami, played a distinguished part in the history of the revival.

By the middle of the fifteenth century there had arisen a greater than any of these, a master whom the Japanese venerate as perhaps their greatest name in painting, certainly among the very greatest—Sesshiu. He was born in 1420. Having studied and worked with the painters of his own country, at the age of forty he determined to visit China and renew his inspiration at the fountain-head of art. To his surprise, he found that he had more to teach than to learn. The Chinese acknowledged his great originality; he became famous; and the Emperor of China himself commissioned him to paint a set of landscapes on his palace walls. Among these was a painting of Fuji, a memory of his own land. This signal and unique honour for a Japanese set the seal on his renown. Sesshiu returned to Japan, and continued to paint till his death at a ripe age in 1506. A painting in the British Museum, made when he was eighty-three, of the merry fat god Hotei pulled along the ground by children, shows that old age had not dimmed his eye nor relaxed the vigour of his hand.

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It is not easy for Europeans to understand quite all the admiration accorded to Sesshiu in Japan ; we are indeed inclined to wonder, at first, at the enthusiasm evoked by this whole phase of Ashikaga painting, in which Sesshiu is the greatest figure. It seems to us so limited, so narrow in its range. It is content with landscape, birds and flowers, adding only a few figures from religious history or legend, and these not as actors in any human drama, but as types of contemplation or spiritual desire. It is an art that is almost wholly subjective. Again, on the technical side we shall, most of us, be more struck with its limitations than with its powers. It eschews colour almost entirely, though only those who have seen and studied some of the light-coloured paintings of a Sesshiu or a Sotan can realise what exquisite harmonies can be attained with tawny and russet, or pale emerald green, against the miraculous range, from silver grey to velvet black, that brush and Chinese ink are capable of in the hand of a Japanese master. How slight, too, seems the workmanship! Even those unused to Oriental art can appreciate such a painting as Sesshiu's "Jurojin," the genius of immortal old age, a hoary figure, bowed with the weight and wise with the wisdom of uncounted years, gazing out from among the intricate branches of blossoming spring trees,

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while the mysterious fawn that companions his solitude rubs its head across his knee. No one can fail to be impressed by the sense of significance and sublimity in this imaginative conception, by the majesty of design and power of execution. This is indeed one of the central masterpieces of the art of Japan. Yet it is on his landscapes that the fame of Sesshiu chiefly rests; landscape, according to his own confession, was the most difficult province of art. And although we may begin by thinking that we know better than the Japanese, and that traditional idolatry has set Sesshiu too high, yet when I recall the landscape sketches of Rembrandt, I feel that in Sesshiu Rembrandt himself would have welcomed a peer. For just as Rembrandt with a blunt reed-point and sepia could conjure up in a few seemingly careless strokes the essentials of a scene, everything in its right place and at its due degree of distance, so Sesshiu amazes us by his power with the brush. His strokes are sudden, strong, and vehement, he seems careless of modulating them: and yet how magically all falls into place—the masts of the fishing-vessels beyond the rocks, the clumps of trees, the towering promontories! It is this extraordinary mastery of forcible brush-stroke which gives Sesshiu his supremacy with the Japanese; this, and the intensity and directness which he combines with

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PLATE XV  
THE HAUNT OF THE WILD GEESE  
BY SESSON  
*British Museum*









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unsurpassed greatness of spirit. As the "Theban eagle" among the poets of Greece, so is Sesshiu among the painters of his country.

But we shall only half understand these Ashikaga masters if we regard their technical achievements only. As I have said already in writing of the Sung artists of China, we must firmly grasp the intention of their work. A painting was as a communicating spark between mind and mind; we must not judge it, as we with our Western notions are too apt to do, for its achievement as a completed piece of workmanship, dwelling on the artist's skill and science. Skill and science in a work of art are, let us never forget, utterly valueless in themselves except as a means to awake emotion of worth and power in ourselves, the spectators. And these painters found that mind could speak to mind by suggestion more intimately than by elaboration. All their art, too, was but one expression of a pervading ideal of life. To find one's own soul, the real substantial soul, beyond and behind not only the passions and unruly inclinations of nature, but also the semblances with which even knowledge, even religion, may cloud reality by imagery, form, ritual—this was the aim of Ashikaga culture; liberation, enlightenment, self-conquest. For the Zen ideal, which had inspired so much of the Chinese art in the Sung age, impregnated even more profoundly,

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if possible, the Ashikaga painters. It was now, under Zen influence, that the Cha-no-ya, the Tea-ceremony, was elaborated ; and I must devote a few words to this singular institution, which was to exert an incalculable influence on the Japanese mind and character.

Tea of choice quality was not known till the twelfth century, when a priest of the Zen sect brought back some plants from China. The wakeful properties of the leaf caused it to be prized as an aid to meditation, and in course of time the tea, at first so valued for its rarity that small quantities of it were given as a reward for heroism in battle, came to be associated in a ceremonial manner with the doctrine of contemplation.

A priest, Shuko, and the painter So-ami, founded the Tea-ceremony, as it is practised in Japan. Acting on their counsels, the Shogun of the day, Yoshimasa, eighth of the Ashikaga line, built the first tea-chamber in his famous Silver Pavilion. Yoshimasa retired in 1472, and gathering round him the finest artists of the time, devoted himself to æsthetic pursuits, setting a fashion to the nobles which was of far-reaching influence on the whole nation. Nothing ornate was suffered in the tea-chamber : its small proportions, its severe furniture, were strictly prescribed ; even the garden seen without must harmonise, and show no gaudy tone, no luxuriant detail ; and in

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conversation all tittle-tattle was to be abhorred. At these meetings a single painting would be shown; and when we look at one of the ink-sketches of this period, and remember the world of thought in which it was produced, we shall understand better its peculiar qualities, its disdain of all emphasis, loudness, and richness, its suggestive slightness and refined simplicity. Austerity is so rarely cultivated by the human spirit, save at the cost of harshness, that we must recognise as a thing of rare felicity the light, flexible, and gracious temper which is infused into the severe aim of the Ashikaga masters. The secret lay in the discovery that beauty has most power on the imagination when not completely revealed; perhaps the statues of antiquity that Time has mutilated are those which move us most; hence the choice of subjects which to us often seem trivial or insignificant, but which to the prepared mood are sufficing hints towards one supreme idea. Mr. Okakura has written some eloquent pages on this theme.\*

With the name of So-ami is associated the elaboration not only of the Tea-ceremony, but of the art of landscape-gardening, another art of Chinese origin. Buddhist monks had been ever careful in their choice of a site for their temples, so that beauty should reside in the whole sur-

\* "Ideals of the East," pp. 168-180.

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rounding, in the genius of the place, rather than in the building merely. By So-ami the features and component parts of such surroundings were analysed and catalogued, and infinite thought was spent on the refinements of an art which aimed at a definite influence on the beholder's mind, at the evocation of certain emotions by the aid of inherent character or associations in the features of a scene. The art of flower arrangement, concerned above all with the interpretation of the life and growth of the flower, not with harmonious colour effects, was another of the studies of the circle of the Silver Pavilion, no less than the old pastime of "listening to incense," an exercise in literary knowledge and taste, even more than in discrimination of the senses.

So-ami, that painter of space and solitude, of great mounded hills and misty marshes where the wild-fowl cry, remained in the purely Chinese tradition which Shiubun inaugurated. But though all the painters of this revival worked in a common spirit and with one ideal, more than one distinct style was grafted on the original stem. Thus the style of Sesshiu was followed by a group of powerful talents, among whom Sesson, Keishoki, and Shiugetsu were the most illustrious. Sesson indeed is almost the rival of Sesshiu. The British Museum is fortunate in possessing a precious roll of eight sketches by Sesson, landscapes which show

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PLATE XVI

SHORIKEN CROSSING THE SEA ON A SWORD

By MOTONOBU

*British Museum*

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to perfection the special qualities of the Sesshiu style, its power of suggesting space, atmosphere, aerial distance, by swift and forcible strokes. A portrait of Vimalakirti by Shiugetsu in the same collection is interesting as being painted, not in the Sung style, but in the contemporary Ming style, which the artist had the opportunity of studying at first hand, since he accompanied his master to China.

A third tradition was formed by Masanobu, the first of the Kano family. It was in this Kano family that the Chinese style was to be assimilated most thoroughly with the Japanese character ; and the Kano style, when fully developed, formed a powerful and persistent tradition, lasting even to this day, and rivalled only by the long line of Tosa in its centuries of fame.

Masanobu, born in 1453, died young, according to the most trustworthy tradition, in 1490. Hence his works are rare, but enough survive to reveal a painter of poetic imagination, the delicate modulation of whose brush contrasts strongly with the vehement force of Sesshiu's strokes. One of the most beautiful pictures of the time is Masanobu's picture of a Chinese sage, whose retirement was dedicated to contemplation of the lotus, musing in his boat on a lake over which feathery willow branches droop, while on the water blossoms of the sacred flower shine in the still morning air, hung

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with veils of tender haze. An old version of this painting has recently been purchased by the Louvre. In our own national collection is a good original landscape in the lightly coloured style.

The gentleness of Masanobu's nature was reinforced by a commanding strength in the genius of his son. Motonobu, if he lacks something of the rarity and loftiness of his father, is the most vigorous and various of the whole Kano school. Few names in Japanese painting stand higher than his. The force and firmness of his brush are controlled by that calligraphic element which is of the essence of the pure Kano style; its supple beauty of stroke adapts itself to every subject, unlike that of Sesshiu, whose imperious freedom of spirit accommodates all things in nature to his own energy and daring. The clean strength of Motonobu's handling is magnificently seen in a painting in the British Museum of the sage Shoriken crossing the sea on a floating sword, defying the rage of the foaming waves and winds that blow his hair and toss his garments. Less triumphant in force of line, but of extraordinary beauty, is a set of three pictures in the same collection. The Chinese and Japanese are fond of these sets of three, in which, as in some of the triptychs of Italian and Flemish art, the subjects are distinct, though the paintings are related in one scheme of design. Here the cen-

PLATE XVII  
A BIRD ON A BLOSSOMING BRANCH

BY UTANOSUKE

*British Museum*

This master was the brother and rival of Motonobu, especially famous for his paintings of birds and flowers







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tral subject is a crane: on one side are birds and a flowering tree on rocks against which a wave breaks in foam; on the other a small bird poises beating against the wind, which bends the strong stalks of a rose-mallow beneath and flutters the petals of its flowers. These are coloured paintings upon paper of a mellow golden tone, harmonising with the rich gold of the brocade silk mount. They are entirely modelled on the art of Sung. But Motonobu's art is eminent in variety and versatility. In landscape, though he keeps mainly to Chinese tradition, he exchanges the solemn dream and poetic reverie of the great Chinese for a wider range of observation, for a more alert and buoyant spirit, a livelier and a swifter touch. Nor did he confine himself to the Chinese style. He married a daughter of Tosa Mitsunobu, and the alliance had effect on his heart. He painted several scrolls in the Tosa manner and with the Tosa conventions, though the Kano character of drawing is apparent in details, especially in the figures. One such scroll depicts the adventures of the hero Raiko, the slayer of an ogre called the Shiuten Doji. A copy of this in the British Museum was catalogued by Dr. Anderson as the work of a Tosa painter. Motonobu was, in fact, the first to adopt an eclectic principle which in later centuries inspired many of the greatest artists of Japan. Born in 1476, he lived on to 1559. During



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the next few generations the Kano family was still to dominate the world of painting. But the style passed through successive phases, not unmodified by outward events. To these I must return. Meanwhile in China the arts had been greatly flourishing under the first Ming emperors, and it was from the developed style of Ming that the second great generation of the Kanos took some of its chief features.

PLATE XVIII  
EAGLE IN SNOW  
ATTRIBUTED TO LIN LIANG  
*British Museum*







## CHAPTER XII. THE MING PERIOD IN CHINA

**P**EDANTRY and conservatism, the ingrained weakness of the Chinese genius, begin to show their paralysing power on painting in the Ming epoch. Yet the period opened with splendour.

In 1368 the Mongols were expelled, and the first Ming emperor mounted the throne. The Chinese themselves divide the period of this dynasty into two; and the first half, down to the end of the fifteenth century, constitutes, for painting, an age of production hardly less important than that of Sung. There is, however, a change of mood; a change from the lofty idealism of the eleventh and twelfth centuries to a more luxurious temper, delighting in external magnificence. The ink-sketch, beloved of the Sung masters, a mode of art in which the materials of expression could almost merge themselves in the artist's thought or emotion, yielded to the sensuous charm of colour. It is true that at the opening of the period we are met by a few masters like Lin Liang (Jap. Rinriō) who still remain in the Sung tradition and prefer to work in monochrome. In the British Museum is a pair of large paintings by this artist, of wild

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geese, lotus, and millet, of a great amplitude of design and force of brush. It is only when we place such work beside a Sung piece, beside Hui Su's "Wild Geese," for example, in the same collection, that we notice a loss of delicacy. Great delicacy can only be accomplished by great power. Weakness, which attempts delicacy and imitates it by smallness of workmanship, is incapable of the nerve-control requisite for real subtlety and fine modulation. In Hui Su's brush there is more power than in Lin Liang's, though it hides rather than displays itself, and only by taking thought do we realise what singular strength of hand must be needed so perfectly to suggest form, outline, and atmosphere within a range of tone so restricted. By comparison Lin Liang seems almost coarse in touch, though only by comparison. Another pair of monochrome paintings in the Museum, two eagles, were formerly attributed to Mu Ch'i, but certainly belong to the early Ming time, and are possibly also by Lin Liang. In one of these especially, in which the fierce bird looks up from a snow-laden branch, the abrupt, strong strokes are of congenial character with the subject. The conception is worthy of a Barye.

The new Ming style is found at its finest in another fifteenth-century master, Lü Ki, by whom there are several paintings in the British Museum. His favourite subjects were flowers and birds with

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PLATE XIX  
THE HUNDRED STAGS

BY WĒN CHÉNG-MING

*Veitch Collection*







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solitudes. In the centre a royal stag, the patriarch of the herd, proudly emerges between two trees. Gustave Courbet made from similar subjects of deer in the woods some of his best pictures, but I do not think he surpassed this Chinese master.

What is now to be noted is that Chinese painting begins to be more remote and less near to us than it was in the Sung masterpieces. That peculiar intimacy with nature which strikes us as so modern in the Sung painters yields to a romantic feeling in landscape; and that fine simplicity, the mark both of the manners and the art of a high civilisation, is exchanged for elaboration and ornateness.

The art of Ch'iu Ying crystallises these tendencies. He is a very popular painter, and imitations of his work abound. His favourite subjects were taken from the life of the court or the illustration of romances. In the British Museum is a long roll depicting the occupations of court ladies. Here they are watering flowers in the garden, there in a pavilion is a group dancing and playing musical instruments; some are reading, others are gathered round a princess whose portrait is being painted. It has pretty motives, such as the bird which alights on a low bough and dips it in the surface of the moat; it is charming in gay colour, it is full of graceful figures. But if

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we compare it for a moment with the Ku K'ai-chih picture, we feel how far the art of China has fallen. The contrast between the feminine types in the two pictures is worth remarking. The quality of Ch'iu Ying's art is seen to more advantage in a small circular painting in the same collection of a lady at her window looking out on a moonlit landscape.

T'ang Yin, who flourished about 1500, was a contemporary of Ch'iu Ying, and painted the same kind of subjects. He is known to the Japanese as To-in or To-hakko.

Genre painting begins to be prominent in this period. Such subjects as the "winding-water fête," when cups were set afloat on a winding stream, and competitors, handicapped according to talent, had to compose a poem before their cup came to the point where they were stationed; games of polo; pedlars with trays of toys and ornaments (an occasion for revelry in jewelled colours); ladies looking at bowls of gold-fish, girls letting off fireworks; the occupations of children; such subjects as these, taken from familiar life, are frequent in Ming art, and anticipate the Ukiyoyé of Japan. Of one such subject, "The Hundred Children," there is a delightful fifteenth-century example in the British Museum: we see the roguish urchins at play, with bows and arrows and with hobby-horses, scuffling together, trying

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their hands at painting, enjoying a marionette theatre, and finally saying their prayers on little mats before going to bed.

At the same time the traditional subjects were not neglected, sages, landscapes, birds, and flowers, only, as I have said, with an ebb of the inspiring glow which had animated earlier and greater times. A significant symptom of decaying vitality is the progressive increase in the copying of old masters by accomplished artists, the growing loss of independence.

Not till the Ming era can we study the painting of China with anything like adequacy of material. But the few remnants that survive of early epochs suffice to put the art of Ming into a secondary place, in spite of the many works of beauty and of splendour which the best years of the dynasty can claim.

In 1644 the weakened empire, corrupted by the court ascendancy of eunuchs, and threatened by a rebel army, called to its aid the Manchu Tartars, wild tribes of herdsmen who had long hovered dangerously on the northern frontier. The Manchus came, and they came to remain. They put an end to the Ming rule, possessed themselves of Peking, and enforced on the Chinese the wearing of the pig-tail in token of subjection.

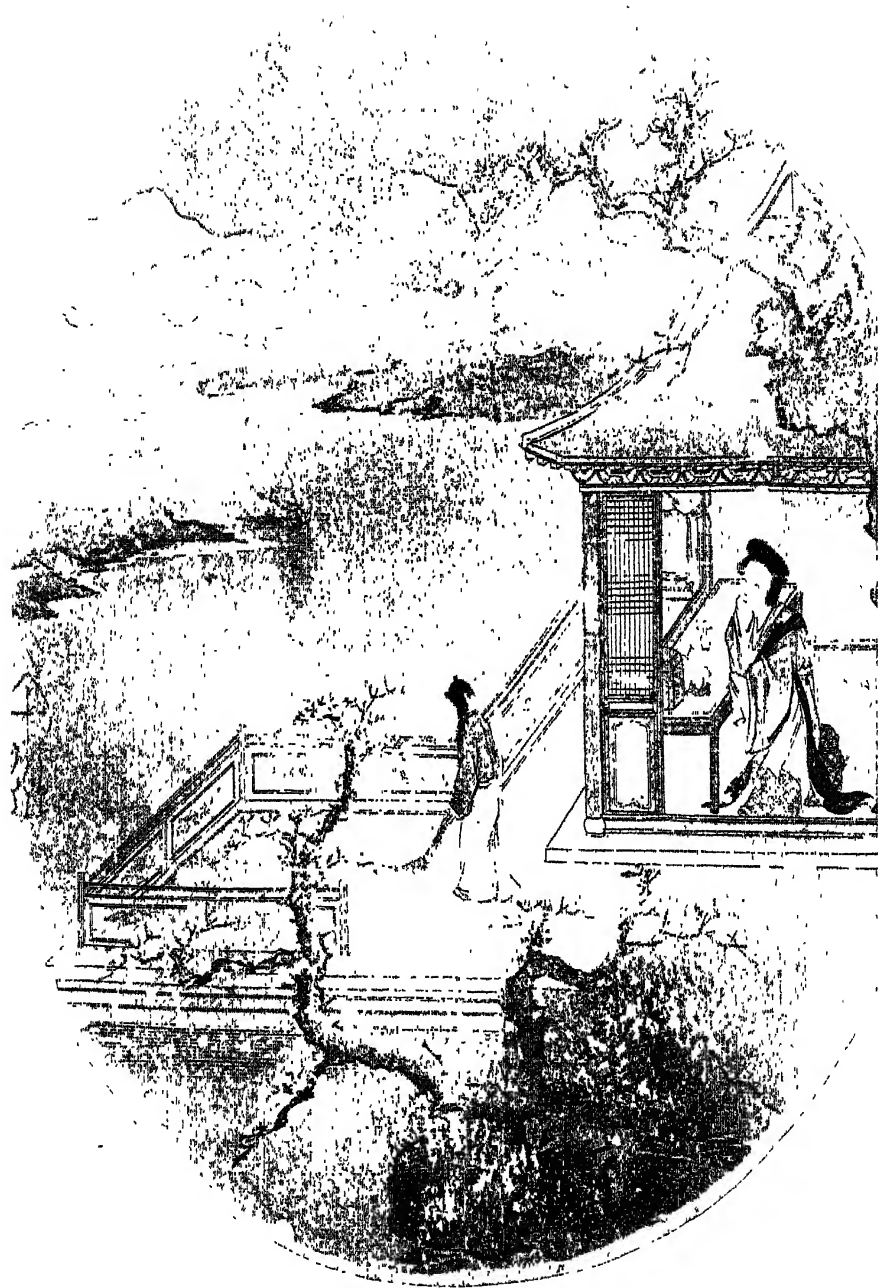
PLATE XX

THE LADY IN THE MOONLIT PAVILION

By CH'IU YING

*British Museum*









### CHAPTER XIII. THE KANO SCHOOL IN THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

**T**HE sixteenth century in Japan was a reign of war and chaos. Once again the great family which had seized the sovereign power and held it for two hundred years fell into impotence and decline. The fate which had overtaken the Fujiwara in the earlier day overtook the Ashikaga in their turn. As their sway grew feebler, so the strength of the feudal barons increased. But each was against his neighbour; fighting was incessant; the country was devastated, no man was secure. The once magnificent city of Kioto lay half ruined: grass grew in the streets; the common people made their tea in the precincts of the palace, where, in miserable seclusion and real poverty, the ladies of the court passed their forlorn and empty days. The Emperor himself supported a precarious existence by selling his autograph.

It is to be noted that now, as always, there was no thought of abolishing the Emperor; his person was too sacred, his power too shadowy. But the ambition of the great barons was to obtain possession of Kioto, and with it the custody of the

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Mikado. The purpose was achieved, and anarchy arrested, by three remarkable men. Nobunaga, a man of genius for war, subdued the rival chiefs, deposed the last Ashikaga Shogun in 1573, and became military dictator in his place. Nobunaga's lieutenant, Hideyoshi, famed as Japan's greatest man of action, succeeded to his power, and brought the whole country under one rule. Not content with this achievement, Hideyoshi, who had risen, like Napoleon, from obscurity, aspired to further conquest. He dreamed of conquering China also; he invaded and laid waste Korea; but his grandiose schemes were frustrated by his death, two years before the century closed, and his troops were recalled to Japan. The third of these commanding historic figures is Iyeyasu, the inscrutable, strong statesman who consolidated the work of Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, kept the feudal barons under strict control by his politic measures, made a new capital in Yedo, on the eastern coast, and founded the line of Tokugawa Shoguns which held power till the revolution of 1868.

The invasion of Korea revived intercourse with the continent, and the severe simplicity of Ashikaga taste was supplanted by the vogue of the now mature Ming style of China, with its rich colour and ornament. The style appealed to the new nobility who had risen to power with Hideyoshi. Untrained in the fine culture of Zen philosophy,

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PLATE XXI  
PINES IN WINTRY MOUNTAINS  
By YEITOKU  
*Freer Collection, Detroit*







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they could appreciate gorgeous decoration, but were indifferent to the subtle beauties of an ink-sketch by So-ami or Sesshiu. Kano Motonobu died in 1559. But he left a successor of genius in his grandson Yeitoku; and it was Yeitoku whom Hideyoshi commissioned to decorate his newly-built vast stone castle of Osaka. It was an age of castles. The most renowned for its splendour was the castle of Momoyama, near Kioto, on the decoration of which the finest art of the age was concentrated. The daimios followed Hideyoshi's example, and all through the country rose castles, furnished in the same gorgeous style.

Yeitoku was trained in Motonobu's school, and inherited the lofty traditions of Ashikaga painting. Hence a style that might easily have fallen into vulgarity and parade preserved in his hands weight and grandeur. This second phase of the Kano school appeals perhaps more to European taste than either the earlier or the succeeding phases. The typical masterpieces of Yeitoku and his pupils were immense screens, decorations on walls or sliding panels, painted in opaque pigments of rich colour on gold leaf. The effect was one of extraordinary magnificence. When Hideyoshi made a public procession, screens were set up along the road for miles together; and Momoyama castle was famed for its "hundred sets" of them. Like Rubens, Yeitoku worked with a large light brush



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and rejoiced in the designing of huge pictures, with gigantic pine-trees and more than life-size figures. Like Rubens, he supervised the work of a crowd of pupils, and even so the demands of the nobles could hardly be supplied. There was a fever of decoration. Yet nothing could surpass the stately impressiveness of Yeitoku at his best. He painted horses in their stalls or in the freedom of the solitary hills, tigers menacing and irresistible, fabulous lions of strange but royal aspect, birds of rich plumage on forest boughs, fawns flying from the retreat of tall waving grasses, heroes and princesses of old Chinese legend, and superb landscapes. In the collection of Mr. Freer of Detroit, who kindly allows me to reproduce it here, is a noble example. How simple are the elements that compose this picture; the great pines, the mountains, the snow; but what a sense of vastness, of majesty, of solitude! A certain solidity of effect allies such work as this to the masterpieces of Europe; and in its own kind I do not know where we shall find painting to surpass it, whether in Japan or in the West.

Yeitoku's greatest pupil, Sanraku, came near his master, but is perhaps less famous for his rich screen-painting than for his work in the pure Kano style, lightly tinted or in monochrome. For the style of Momoyama—the name of the palatial castle has been given to the period—was to last

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for no long time. The art of the Kano family, still gloriously persisting, began to revert to its earlier tradition, and refreshed its strength in the next generation with the advent of its third sovereign master, Yeitoku's grandson, Tanyu.

Sanraku, as we shall see later, helped to inaugurate, in certain paintings of popular life which he did not sign, the beginnings of that school of genre, called Ukiyoyé, which was to flourish so exceedingly in the eighteenth century.

One of his pupils, Sansetsu, who died at the age of sixty-three in 1652, must be mentioned. Sanraku adopted him as his son, and he proved worthy of the finest traditions of Kano. Something of antique simplicity gives character to his work, and links him with the older masters rather than with the looser swing and dash coming into Kano style during his lifetime with Tanyu's ascendancy. A fine example in the British Museum, here reproduced, is a masterpiece of impressionist rendering of a downpour of rain drenching the lake shore and blotting the mountain peaks.

Tanyu was born in 1602. And now with the seventeenth century Japan enters on the long and profound peace which lasted under the Tokugawa rule for more than two centuries and a half. As before in the days of the Fujiwara, this singular nation again closed itself to the outer world.

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Foreign intercourse was prohibited. By an order of the third of the Tokugawas, Iyemitsu, all large ships on the coast of Japan were destroyed. War and politics were no longer the predominant interests. Amusement in every form became more and more the engrossing occupation. The policy of the Tokugawas was to promote unity of government; the power of the feudal lords was to be restricted; and to this end each of the great daimios was required to spend half of the year in the new capital of Yedo in attendance on the Shogun. As a consequence the city grew swiftly in size and in splendour. The populace woke to consciousness of their past in the nation, and the industrial arts flourished as never before.

The seventeenth century was remarkable in painting chiefly for the new movements which were being originated, both in regard to subject and to style. It saw the beginning of genre painting in Matabei, founder of that school which in the next two centuries became the special art of Yedo, and produced that marvellous mass of colour-prints so prized by the collectors of Europe. It saw also the rise of the magnificent school of decorative painting and lacquer design culminating in Korin. But before considering these new movements, let us see how the Kano tradition was being upheld by the successors of Masanobu, Motonobu, and Yeitoku.

PLATE XXII

RAIN

By SANSETSU

*British Museum*







## THE KANO SCHOOL

In Tanyu and his school the long line of Kano enjoyed its last period of glory, only to fade into academic futility with the advent of the eighteenth century.

The ideal of Iyeyasu, the great founder of the Tokugawa dynasty of Shoguns, was simplicity. And this ideal partly explains the reaction in Kano painting from the gorgeousness of Momoyama. But though Iyeyasu may have desired a return to the refined severity of Ashikaga culture, the temper of the times was against him. The nation gained in awakening consciousness of unity. But the very policy of the Tokugawas, which obtained peace at last for the long-devastated country by vigorous exertion of authority, promoted a state of things inimical to the austere art which Zen teaching had inspired in times of material peril and disaster. Before the end of the century, in the famous period of Genroku (1688-1704), the life of Yedo was a sort of carnival of amusement and luxury for a people no longer allowed by circumstance to participate in the strenuous interests of politics and war.

The mood of Ashikaga times was not to be recovered. That exquisite fabric of art and manners, which only a long tradition of study and religious thought could have prepared, could not survive the great upheaval through which Japan had passed without some inner change. We feel the change



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when we pass from a painting of Masanobu to a painting by Tanyu. There is a loss of spirituality, an element of display.

Tanyu is a painter born, a master of the brush who exults in his mastery. The virtuosity which displays itself in much of his painting may lead us into thinking of him too exclusively as a marvellous executant, lacking in the rarer emotional and imaginative qualities. Yet he can touch lofty heights. Few have evoked a nobler image from that poetic subject dear to the painters of Japan, Kwannon, the goddess of love and mercy, seated by the wild sea-shore on a rock where the water breaks in foam tossed up even to the hem of her garment; an image of heavenly serenity throned above the tides of trouble and of passion; or Monjiu, the deity of wisdom, a face inscrutable, a gaze profound with the intensity of thought, rising tranquil, with dark, smooth hair, as if from mists of contemplation. But it is in landscape that Tanyu achieves his peculiar triumphs. A well-known masterpiece is the "Fuji from Kiyomi Bay." The growing national spirit shows itself in the choice of a Japanese landscape by a painter of the school which had repeated for generations themes borrowed from the classic landscape of China, and disdained the beauties of their native land, much as the Roman Campagna imposed itself, after Claude's example, on the imagination of those

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landscape painters of Northern Europe who aspired to a classic style. Tanyu's "Fuji" is painted in a mood more sober and serene than is his wont ; it is a work of his early prime ; we feel the emotion of beauty which he felt in painting the peerless mountain. It is almost a monochrome, touched with colour ; blue and green melt into the rich black of ink.

Even more magical is the painter's use of Chinese ink on great screens where immense distances of mountain, shore, and sea retreat in impalpable veils of air ; on nearer heights a clump of trees has been created with a swift and sudden turn of the wet brush—shapeless it seems, yet it is there, a living thing : out of a misty hollow rises a temple from which the bell, one knows, is sounding in mellow tones ; over remote reed-beds come wild geese in trailing flight ; a whole panel is blank except for a pale round glimmer—the moon. The materials used—the expanse of absorbent, self-toned paper ; the ink, now melted into the surface in faint wide washes, now flung in vivid blot or splash, now shaping a mountain's contour with exquisite certainty—these materials seem to have merged themselves into mere expression as words fit thoughts. How large, how liberating the effect ! What exhilaration in this sense of ease, this joy of mastery !

It was this easy, fluid confidence of Tanyu's

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brush which enchanted succeeding generations and seduced them to their ruin.

Tanyu was the eldest of three brothers. The other two, Naonobu and Yasunobu, were both distinguished painters. Naonobu especially, a gentler nature than Tanyu's, is a master of monochrome and the art of reticent suggestion. Yasunobu represents the Kano school in a more academic style. Naonobu's son Tsunenobu ranks as the ablest follower of Tanyu, and has left admirable pictures, though they betray less original force of mind.

A pupil of Tanyu who rose to independent rank was Morikage. Little is known of him save that he was poor and had little popularity. His instinct for delicacy and refinement of workmanship marks him out in an age that loved splendour and bold execution.

Among the pupils of Yasunobu was a still more remarkable painter, Hanabusa Itcho (1652-1724). His originality soon declared itself, and caused a rupture with his masters. Itcho, though he always retained the traces of his Kano training, created a style of his own, in which he gave rein to his strong sense of humour and a vein of mocking wit. In 1698 a painting of his gave offence to the Shogun, and he was sentenced to banishment for twelve years. Even in landscape subjects Itcho reveals the light and witty handling congenial to

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PLATE XXIII

MONJIU

By TANYU

*Arthur Morrison Collection*







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his temperament. But the significance of his art lies rather in his preference for subjects from popular life, which was beginning to be illustrated in such profusion and with so much charm by the artisan school of Yedo. That school, however, derived its first inspiration from an offshoot of the aristocratic schools, and its origin goes back to painting of much earlier times.



## CHAPTER XIV. MATABEI AND THE BEGINNINGS OF GENRE

THE close of the fifteenth century in Europe saw the beginning in Italian art of the painting of scenes from daily life which we call genre. Before that time painters had confined themselves to the set subjects of religion, allegory, war, mythology, portraiture.

The inventor of genre painting for Southern Europe—in the North certain lost pictures by Van Eyck created a similar tradition—was Giorgione. An atmosphere of mystery and fascination haunts the name of the poetic Venetian, to whom so few works can actually be assigned, though so many have passed under his name—a fact testifying to the peculiar fruitfulness of his genius, which, though not eminently productive in quantity of work, was yet so rich in inspiration both for contemporaries and for the future. Those themes of beauty which Giorgione discovered in the favourite pleasures of his own Venetians—their summer picnics among the wooded hills, to which music lent a heightened charm of feeling or of reverie—were the Italian prototype of all the long array of Dutch genre pieces, where the sunny, open-air pleasures of the South have given way to the

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## MATABEI

interiors of the North, with stray beams of sunshine adding some touch of pensive charm and suggestion to shadowy corners and familiar furniture, some glorifying caress to the common things of home. In Watteau and his followers, again, the same type of art is born anew under different conditions, and removed by one degree from actuality; while in Chardin it reverts to homeliness, infused with a refined and heightened sense for beauty.

*Ukiyoyé* is the Japanese equivalent of genre. "Pictures of the fleeting world" it means, a term of Buddhist origin, coloured with the Buddhist reproach of all that appeals to the senses and belongs to the transitoriness of miserable mortality. But in time the word lost this colour. Applied originally to painters of daily life, on account of the subjects they preferred, it came to mean a recognised style, and the artists of the school were known by that style even when they painted landscapes, flowers, battle scenes, or any of the recognised subjects of the older schools.

Matabei, the originator of *Ukiyoyé*, holds a place in the art of Japan analogous in more than one respect to that of Giorgione in Europe. Numbers of paintings pass under his name, but very few can really be claimed for his brush, and scarcely any are authenticated. Various and contradictory

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accounts of him have been handed down, and there have not been wanting native critics to deny his very existence. Quite recently, however, the real facts of his career \* have been brought to light, and his identity fully established. Matabei's family name was Araki. His father was a lieutenant of Nobunaga, and having rebelled against his master was forced to commit suicide. Matabei, who was born in 1578, was then a baby of two, and was carried off in safety by his nurse to Kyoto, where she procured his adoption into the related family of Iwasa. He became known as a painter, and as his reputation grew he was summoned to Yedo, and worked there for the Shogun. He died at Yedo in 1650. His eldest son, Katsushige Gembei (d. 1673), also painted; and Gembei's son, Kores-hige, continued the family tradition in a weaker style. There were other followers who painted genre. To the productions of all of these the name of Matabei has been vaguely attached. The genuine work of the master has, however, decided characteristics of its own. He affected, especially in his women, a peculiar type of face, short in the nose, but with long, full cheeks and rounded chin. His design is notable for the simplicity of its contours, his brush outlining the figure with sweeping lines which are yet supple, sensitive, and

\* First published by Mr. Arthur Morrison in the *Monthly Review*.

PLATE XXIV

DANCER

BY MATABEI

*Arthur Morrison Collection*







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expressive of the form within them. With great naturalness of pose and gesture he has a profound sense of style, and swiftly seizes essentials. There is something rare about his art which matches the scarcity of his productions. Of these, some of the best authenticated are a set of paintings of the Thirty-six Poets, signed on the back and dated 1640. Here the painter describes himself as "belonging to the lower stream of Tosa Mitsunobu," a description which indicates how he regarded himself, as a painter of the Tosa tradition who applied the Yamato style to a lower kind of subject than the artists of the court. These Thirty-six Poets followed, indeed, the Tosa treatment of such portraiture, though with a new vitality supplanting the old stiffness. But Matabei's distinctive genius is far better seen in a set of four pictures of men and women playing games, painted on a screen as a part of the wedding portion of a Tokugawa princess. Here we see what a powerful originator he really was. The Tosa style, long ago in the thirteenth century, when Keion and Mitsunaga wielded the brush, so apt and free in depicting groups from the actual life of Japan, had frozen into utter formalism. The Chinese style, on the other hand, with its vigorous brush-work—never more vigorous than in the hands of Matabei's younger contemporary, Tanyu—was ill adapted for Japanese subjects. Matabei had learnt both styles. He could



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paint goddesses with the long flowing lines and soft light tints of the classic masters; he could sketch legendary heroes in washes of ink. But in fusing the two elements into a manner of his own Matabei escaped the ordinary fate of eclectics. There is nothing in him of the tameness that so often attends the calculated attempt to blend a variety of qualities, such as we find in the Carracci. On the contrary, there is a sort of primitive fire in his painting. All his qualities are native to him; there is nothing taken on from outside. Nor was he tempted, as many leaders of revolt have been, into the violence of reaction from accepted type. There is the centred strength of balance in his art. His was a truly original genius, in that what he expressed in his painting was entirely his own: had there been no novelty in his art, his originality would not have been less. Nothing is more entirely Japanese in its beauty than the beauty discovered in life by Matabei. Perhaps these may seem extravagant words when we contemplate the artist's few extant works. But it is with him as with Giorgione; we feel him a power working in the life of art, perhaps even more in the production of others than in his own.

Matabei was called Ukiyo Matabei by his contemporaries, from the subjects of his pictures. But though he was the first to devote all his powers to

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genre, there were painters before him of the aristocratic schools, both Kano and Tosa, who had painted genre subjects occasionally. The earliest known example is a screen by Hideyori, a son of the great Motonobu. Kano Sanraku is known to have painted in this style, and some have suggested that he is the author of an unsigned work, called the Hikone Screen, which is at any rate the work of a master. This is, in a sense, the most important of all the productions of the first phase of Ukiyoyé, and rivals in beauty the work of Matabei, under whose name it has long been known, though the types of face, with strongly-marked lines and small chins, are totally distinct from his. It is painted on a gold ground, like the screens of Yeitoku and Sanraku. It represents men, women, and children amusing themselves: some are painting, some reading, some playing on musical instruments, others playing "go." The figures are full of life and character—note especially the face of the blind man playing the samisen—yet at the same time it is a wonderful piece of decoration, finely spaced, and with a rare sense of beauty in silhouette.

Tosa artists also painted genre, though nothing could show more clearly the feebleness into which that school had declined than its inability to take up a mode of art so suited to its genius and traditions. The work was left for a new school,

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for painters of the people, painting no longer for an aristocracy, but for their own class. To them we must return in time. For the present we must see what other movements were taking place, and what changes were working among the older schools.

PLATE XXV  
RED AND WHITE CHRYSANTHEMUMS  
By SOTATSU  
*Arthur Morrison Collection*







## CHAPTER XV. THE GREAT DECORATORS

**A**S the power of Michelangelo proved the ruin of the Florentine school, which could not match his force yet could not help following in his wake, so the power of Tanyu dissolved the art of Kano, though in the school of Tsunenobu the great tradition was for a time not ingloriously prolonged. The Kano family continued to hold official rank in the Shogun's court, while at Kioto the Imperial house fostered the line of Tosa. But the old inherited styles tended to break up or merge in one another. Mitsuoki (1617-1691) revived something of the old fame of Tosa in his delicate and distinguished art, but his subjects were taken often from the themes of Chinese art; he was specially renowned for his paintings of quails. The same tendencies appear in a branch of the Tosa school, the Sumiyoshi, which had come into prominence. More significant for the nation, however, was the work of independent artists. Among those who remained at Kioto when the new capital was founded was a remarkable man who inaugurated a new style in decorative work. This was Koyetsu. His family, the Honnami, were experts in all that relates to the manufacture of swords. The sword is more than a mere weapon in Japan. It is "the



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soul of the samurai," and by far the most valued of his possessions. The sword-smith must be a man of high character and pure life ; the forging of the steel was done with religious rite and ceremony, and the sword itself came to be regarded as a sort of other conscience, an ideal by which a man should test his life. Blades by one of the most famous makers are priceless. Forgeries have always abounded ; and Koyetsu is known as the first expert whose authority on a question of genuineness was universally accepted as final. In painting, Koyetsu was a pupil of Yusho, chief of a branch of the Kano school. Then he studied the old Tosa masterpieces. His own style is an independent one. But it is not as a painter that he acquired his fame ; it is as a lacquerer and as a master of calligraphy. He created a new mode of lacquer-work by the employment of lead, tin, and shells in decoration. He was a student of the Zen doctrine, was an adept in the Tea-ceremony and in landscape gardening, and lived a life of lofty seclusion. He died in 1643.

With Koyetsu is associated another man of genius, his friend Sotatsu. The two sometimes worked together on a single makimono, Koyetsu adding specimens of his beautiful writing to Sotatsu's paintings. Little is known of Sotatsu's life. But his works reveal a consummate genius for design. Among all the eminent flower-  
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painters of Japan he stands, in the estimation of his countrymen, supreme. The significance of his achievement lies in his revival of the glory of colour which had been an integral part of the old Yamato painting. The now decaying Tosa line was no longer capable of expressing ideas by colour. Mitsuoki was deserting the rich colour-schemes of Tosa for the light tints of Kano. Sotatsu, who had studied both styles, evolved a style which has its roots in Tosa principles of design and keeps the rich Tosa colour, but his brush-work has the nervous force of the Chinese tradition, and his art breathes the pure and lofty tone of Ashikaga. Technically he was an innovator. He mixed gold with his Chinese ink, adding a hidden lustre and rare gleam to grey and black. The leaves of his flowers are often veined with gold. As in the old Tosa scroll-paintings, his flowers are simplified, detached, almost symbolic, yet full of life and sap. He was fond of effacing the ground; we see shoots of bamboo and young fern-fronds springing up from space. The tendency of his design was to modify the old linear method, and to work less by line than by mass. His typical masterpieces are screens overlaid with gold or silver leaf, on which the pigment is gorgeously encrusted. Yet his magnificence of colour, which loves broad spaces

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of lapis blue, and exults in crimsons, emerald, and purple, keeps always a stately dignity; a marvellous sense of measure holds all the elements of his art in balance. What strange masterpieces he could make of simplest things we see in a pair of screens which have for subject nothing but clothes-horses. True, the clothes which hang on them are of sumptuous brocade; but it is the spacing above all which shows the master and makes beauty unexpectedly to appear. He painted also in monochrome.

The fame of Sotatsu has been unduly overshadowed by the fame of his follower, Korin. Korin is one of the few artists of Japan who is known in Europe; known, it must be said, chiefly by the innumerable imitations and forgeries which pass under his name. But in our admiration for this wonderful master we must not forget how vast a debt he owes to Sotatsu in painting, to Koyetsu in calligraphy and in lacquer-work. The peculiarities in design and brush-work which mark the painting of Sotatsu are all found again in Korin, though in him the style has become more conscious and more concentrated. His temperament is less grave; it has something defiant in it. Sotatsu's art had its roots in the old art of Tosa, the national style of Japan, but was developed by him into freedom, breadth, and suppleness. Korin carries

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the style to climax and extreme, so that in him we see the distinctive essence of the Japanese genius in final flower. He is perhaps the most Japanese of all the artists of Japan. It is because his art sums up so much that the style, which actually was originated by Koyetsu and Sotatsu bears the name of Korin.

The decorative genius that flowers in the painting and in the lacquer of this school was perhaps the boldest and most fertile that the world has seen. "Decorative" is a term that carries with it to our ears associations of what is abstract, systematised, restful in art; it does not suggest the stimulating qualities, the energy and daring, of Korin.

In Europe we talk of decorative art as different in kind from pictorial art, but in Japan the division is hardly apparent. Decoration must always be governed in idea by architecture. Now in Japanese architecture it is a group of forms rather than a single form, and the whole surroundings of a building rather than the building alone, which is considered. Not only is a harmonious site carefully chosen, but the material surroundings may be artificially altered to harmonise with the building. It is, so to speak, a landscape conception of architecture, just as a landscape idea controls the figure-painting of Japan. Thus, while our architecture triumphs in

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massiveness and concentration, and controls thereby the instinct of designers toward the rigid and symmetrical, the lightness of Japanese buildings, which are made to belong as if by right of natural growth to their surroundings, and to melt their beauty into the beauty of the groves and hills, this lightness of structure—not wholly to be explained by the frequency of earthquakes—invites and fosters the designer's instinct towards delicacy and naturalism in decoration. We have seen that when for the first time massive stone castles were erected by Hideyoshi and his barons, a decorative style of painting arose which is more massive in character than anything else in the pictorial art of Japan, and begins to have affinity with the art of Europe.

In the Korin school we find the same style of design used both in painting and applied art. But Japanese decoration never hesitates to use pictorial motives. We know from experience that European decoration is rarely able to dispense with symmetry or a geometrical basis, whereas the Japanese will decorate a lacquer box with a moonlit landscape, and wild geese flying across the sky, and we feel that it is in perfect taste. The truth is, that European painting since the Renaissance has been so much occupied with the problem of representing depth and relief that pictorial motives have to a great measure lost

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touch with the primary motive of decorative design. We now associate decorative art with design from which the representative and imaginative elements have been almost discarded. In Japan there has never been this divorce, because the cast shadow has never been admitted into painting, and illusion never aimed at. Hence the decorative motive has never been absent from Japanese pictorial art. Decoration does not confront the Japanese with a new and different problem from painting. They have been able to discard symmetry as a geometric basis, and to found their decoration on the same subtle principles of balance which underlie European painting. People often talk and write as if Japanese design was mere felicitous caprice and irregularity. On the contrary, it has science as well as taste behind it. The national cult of *ike-bana*, or flower arrangement, shows us how intense has been the Japanese study of balance in the living growth of plants. Rodin, who says, "Balance is the pivot of art," has studied both natural forms and the human body from the same point of view. Japanese design inherits the training, bred to instinct, of centuries of study and observation, and the efforts of modern artists in Europe to achieve the effects of a Korin merely by imitation from the outside expose to ludicrous result their total insufficiency.

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To the special qualities of buoyancy, clearness, delicacy, which belong to the character of the Japanese and are inherent in their art, Korin adds something more: a frank audacity, a gaiety that is almost arrogant, a confident challenging note. He satisfies the eye, but he stimulates and stirs rather than soothes. His art is conceived in the Dorian mood. His brush has the trenchant movement of a sword held in a nervous grip. Something fiery and abrupt informs his design and gives strangeness to its beauty. He has a way of getting to the bare elements of expression. His figures, like Daumier's, will sometimes be concentrated into one great gesture. Like all his countrymen, in painting flowers he is interested above all in their growth, the charm of their springing lines, careful neither to pervert them or to tame them into adumbrations of, or embroideries upon, a geometrical pattern. But more than this: his genius seizes and expresses the force of their growth, the force of the straight-shooting iris blades, of the bamboo shoots which burst up even through the frozen sod. Thus the irises of a famous screen standing sharp against the gold ground impress us at once with a sort of architectural quality as decoration, and with a vivid sense of life and the power of life. He was fond of painting wild waves—blue, rearing, crested waves tossed up on a gold background:

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PLATE XXVI  
THE WAVE SCREEN  
BY KORIN  
*Boston Museum*









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decorative again, superbly decorative, and conventional if you will; but, looked at long, they seem to grow into a strange and formidable reality of their own, such as might haunt the midnight visions of one whose life had tasted deeply of the terror and the beauty of the sea.

In his half-humorous painting of the Thirty-six Poets, grouped together in a single picture, one notes the extraordinary skill of arrangement, and also the characteristically Japanese composition, held together by the play of relations between the figures, no one of them forming a centre or focus.

As a painter, Korin must yield to the greater Sotatsu. His supreme triumphs, it seems to me, are certain lacquer boxes of classic fame, decorated with lead and mother-of-pearl. Simple, rude, and careless may seem the design at first blush; yet how it continues more and more, as we look, to attract and impress! There is something quintessential about the art which with such bare elements as these—a leafing spray, a temple gateway and its grove of pines, shown in rudiment and symbol—has power at once to stimulate, surprise, and satisfy like a medal by Pisanello.

The influence of Korin's design upon applied art has been immense. Not less distinguished than Korin's work on lacquer was that of his

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brother Kenzan on pottery. Kenzan's design is allied to that of Korin, but is fond of pliant twisted sprays where his brother prefers more massive and straight growths. Kenzan was also a fine painter, though his pictures are rare.

Korin and Kenzan were sons of Soken, a pupil of one of Koyetsu's pupils, and their family was connected with that of Koyetsu; but Korin was not, as has been asserted, himself trained under the older artist, who died, in fact, in 1643, whereas Korin was not born till 1661. Korin was a pupil in painting of Kano Tsunenobu (or, as some say, Yasunobu) and of Gukei, a painter of that branch of the Tosa school which is called Sumiyoshi. He worked in Kyoto, but was expelled from the city on account of what was thought his wasteful luxury. The occasion was this. The artist accompanied two bankers of Kyoto on an excursion to view the cherry-blossom. At noon the bankers brought out their luncheon from beautifully decorated luncheon boxes. Korin produced his, wrapped in fibrous sheathing of bamboo; but the wrapper was covered with gold-leaf on which was an exquisite design. Having finished his luncheon, Korin threw the wrapper away. The shocked men of business reported the incident, and the artist was bidden to leave Kyoto. He took up his abode in Yedo, but in time returned to the old capital. He

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built a tea-room for the Tea-ceremony in a garden which he filled with curious and beautiful plants, and used to spend entire days watching the unfolding of the buds or the falling of the leaves.

The Genroku era, in which Korin lived, was one of unparalleled luxury and magnificence. New designs and patterns for stuffs and dresses were in continual request, and Korin delighted to improvise some novel idea in decoration for the dresses of fair women. We read of parties at which the ladies withdrew and returned seven or eight times, appearing each time with a different dress, always of the same colour, but always with a new design.

Never, perhaps, in history has there been a time so rich in fantastic gorgeousness. And over it all, disseminating the seed of its strange beauty, played the fire of Korin's genius.

## CHAPTER XVI. NEW MOVEMENTS IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

**T**HE slow, gradual, but steady ebb of animating glow and vigour, which had set in on Chinese art during the Ming period, continued into the eighteenth century, and has continued apparently to the present day. Not that admirable pictures were not produced in great numbers; what was wanting was not skill or taste, but the fresh transforming impulse which inspires men to see earth and heaven with new eyes, an impulse needing, perhaps, to come from some deeper movement in the nation's life; and no such movement came.

The weakness of Confucianism, its inclination to fixity and to establish over the mind a despotism

Heavy as frost and deep almost as life,

became more and more visible; and no new stirring from without, such as Buddhism had brought, was at hand to rescue the degenerating genius of the nation from itself. Admiration of the past had become idolatry. When a man achieves distinction in China, and is ennobled,

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the honour does not descend to his posterity, but is conferred on so many generations of his dead ancestors. So too in painting men's faces turned to what was gone before, careless of what was to come after. Want of faith in the future paralysed to a great extent the energies of the present. With aspirations thus turned backward, it was remarkable that China could still produce so many artists and so much good work.

When our knowledge of the art of the present dynasty has become more definite and tangible, it may be possible to distinguish the influence of outstanding personalities and to gauge their worth. Prof. Hirth has collected a great deal of information about these painters, and from him we learn something of certain individual men whose names stand high in the esteem of their countrymen. Such are the four landscape painters called Wang, who flourished at the beginning of the dynasty. But in a book of the present scope we are concerned less with individual names than with general movements. And this period was the reign of the Southern school.

Far back in the eighth century and the great times of the T'ang dynasty, the poetic artist Wang Wei, we saw, originated the Southern style in landscape, of which a later phase was the so-called Literary Style. The votaries of this school ranked the inspired and careless



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sketch of a literary amateur above the finest technical mastery. Subjective merits only counted. It was in a sense a return to the ideas with which the famous Zen sect had inspired the slight ink-painting of the Sung period in China and the Ashikaga period in Japan. But it was a return which pushed those ideas to caricature; and at the back of it was no longer the lofty atmosphere of religious aspiration, having its counterpart in life and conduct, but a dilettantist spirit not averse to fostering a fashionable craze.

The movement has its interest and significance as being a last effort of the Chinese genius to throw off the yoke of too rigid academic formula and prescription. But, deriving no fresh element to support and nourish it from without, it took the curious form of depreciating everything in a painting which had obvious technical power. It not only encouraged excessive slightness of execution, but affected weakness and incoherence in brush-work, in revolt from the accepted supremacy of the strong and rhythmic line of the classic schools. Something parallel may be found in a phase of recent French painting, where an effort towards sincerity and reaction from the formulated style of academic drawing shows itself in a calculated roughness and clumsiness of touch, and a horror of beauty in pigment. But, in con-

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formity with the instinct of the West, this movement is allied with a scrupulous naturalism. In China, on the contrary, the movement allied itself with the association of literature. Europeans, therefore, are hardly capable of appreciating whatever charm this kind of painting possesses.

It is probable that, from want of knowledge, we underrate the Chinese artists of the eighteenth century. Certain it is that from them their Japanese contemporaries received no insignificant stimulus.

At the close of the Ming dynasty many a refugee from China, mostly scholars and priests, refusing to accept the Tartar rule, found a home in Japan, where the study of the Chinese classics was now a reviving enthusiasm. Chinese painters also arrived, bringing with them both the literary style and the decorative coloured style of the later Ming. They worked at Nagasaki, the one open port, and Japanese artists flocked to learn from them. The most important of these men was Chen Nan-Ping, a painter not, it is said, uninfluenced by the realism of European art, whose vigorous and graceful pictures of birds and flowers evoked enormous admiration and were greatly imitated. Chen Nan-Ping arrived at Nagasaki in 1731. The literary style, too, was introduced, and was able to renew itself by an

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alliance with the movement towards naturalism now prevalent.

What were the conditions of art and society in Japan at the time of this invasion from China?

On the one hand, there was the teeming city of Yedo, dominated by the vast castle of the Shogun, with its many moats, as its population was dominated by the rigid Tokugawa rule. Yedo art was sharply divided. The official Kano painters of the court, whose mode of work was prescribed by fixed authority, starved on lifeless academic formula and routine, and produced little that was not merely an imitation, more or less clever, of Tanyu or Tsunenobu. Despised by these feeble representatives of an old and great tradition, the multitude of Ukiyoyé painters and colour-print designers, men of the artisan class, were illustrating, in innumerable woodcuts, the life of the populace and the drama of the popular stage. Cut off from the life of the nobles and the samurai, they created a world of art, beautiful in its kind, which is self-enclosed, and has but little relation with the ideals of the older schools. This thriving popular school we will leave for a while and turn to the ancient capital of the Mikados—to Kioto. Here the power of the Shoguns was less openly exercised; and as the growing elements of revolt against the Toku-

PLATE XXVII  
WINTER MELTING INTO SPRING

BY WATANABE SHIKO

*Arthur Morrison Collection*

Screen ; painted on a gold ground







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gawa policy and discipline, even against the Shogunate itself, gathered at Kioto, so too at Kioto we find the most vigorous and independent artists.

It was the painters of Kioto who responded to the new current of ideas flowing through Nagasaki from China.

Thus we find Riurikio refining on the decorative colour of later Ming, while his pupil, Ikeno Taigado, takes up the light, loose, faintly tinted style of the Southern school. Buson also works in the Southern style, painting Chinese landscapes or deer in mountain solitudes, but with an added force of naturalism. And in Buson's pupil, Goshun, the strain of naturalism becomes predominant. This was only in accordance with the temper of the time. Goshun, dissatisfied with Buson's teaching, betook himself to another master, who at first refused but afterwards admitted him as a pupil. This other master was Maruyama Okio, the most famous painter of the age.

Okio was born in 1733. He was the son of a farmer, and as a child showed a passion for drawing. He studied the styles of all the older schools, and some of his best paintings are inspired by the ancient masters; but his mature and characteristic work is in the style which he himself invented. He copied European engrav-



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ings with his brush, and aspired to infuse a greater spirit of realism into the art of his own country. Compared with what we call realism in the West, Okio's innovations seem to have little claim to such a title. Yet we recognise in his art, along with acceptance of the conventions which Asiatic painting had never discarded, a new particularity and precision. He observed nature keenly; and no painter surely was ever gifted with sight more sensitive or more searching. A hand which had almost miraculous control of the brush was at the service of a vision of exquisite lucidity.

"Nature nerveuse, fine, et froide," he is happily characterised by M. Hovelaque. In his detachment, his marvellous eyesight, his fine taste, he reminds us of Velasquez. Not without that coldness of temperament, perhaps, could Okio have achieved his singularly unruffled masterpieces. A sweet playfulness comes out in him when he paints his delightful pictures of puppies, a favourite subject; but he rarely communicates his mood. He is capable of grandiose conceptions, as in a celebrated pair of screens depicting the River Hodzu, a torrent pouring down a rocky valley, or as in the series of "The Seven Calamities," in which the elemental terrors of flood and earthquake are depicted with immense power. Yet Okio never affects us as the masters of the

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Ashikaga period affect us: we feel the difference of import, of all that lies behind a work of art in the recesses of thought, reverie, spiritual ardour, and desire. Okio is too absolute a master of his means: he is no longer the wooer of beauty, but the sovereign, dispassionate observer who can do with his brush all he wills, to the utmost limits, so it seems, of his ambition. And so we prize him most in those wonderful pictures of carp gliding and swerving through water, of great pine branches powdered with snow, of willow or maple spreading their faultless tracery against a serene space of sky, of birds in flight seen as we might see them if we had an eagle's eye to follow them through the air: all such themes of nature his art seems to hold and image for us as if with the heightened purity of a mirror's reflection. There is nothing blurred, nothing violent, nothing troubled in this unerring art, clean in vision as it is clean in touch. Far removed as Okio's painting is from mere naturalism—for a profound science in composition and a supremely fastidious taste are of its essence—yet it was the realistic effort in it which had most influence on the century. A similar effort is not absent from the work of Ganku, a painter of temperament strongly contrasting with Okio. Ganku, who was Okio's junior by sixteen years, and survived him by more than forty—he lived

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on to 1838—comes nearest of the modern masters to the freedom, fire, and grandeur of the Ashikaga times. His brush-work has a vibrant quality which makes Okio's beside it seem cold and almost dry. He is especially famous for his tigers, and painted them in his youth with a patient realism, though his opportunities for study from nature must have been exceedingly limited. Yet he excelled in other subjects too. His paintings of deer and of peacocks are impressive in a way the Shijo pictures very rarely are; they communicate the dignity of the painter's nature. In these, and still more in his Chinese heroes and sages, he allies himself with the inspired masters of classic times. Ganku is ranked by his countrymen as the founder of a school bearing his name.

While Okio enjoyed fame and prosperity, surrounded by eager disciples, a singular artist led a life of poverty and seclusion in the same city of Kyoto. Soga Shohaku came of the old Soga family which in Ashikaga days had been eminent in art, and himself claimed to be a reincarnation of Soga Jasōku. In his life and in his art he reminds us often of William Blake, who was working at the same time in London. He was thought mad by his neighbours. He poured scorn on the successful Okio, as Blake poured scorn on the successful Reynolds. He turned away from the art

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of his own time, and sought to recapture the strength and fire of the fifteenth-century masters. But, as with Blake, the aspiration was only half realised, and begot a strain of the fantastic and grotesque.

Jakuchiu was another contemporary of marked independence, also not without his eccentricities. He too was poor and careless of worldly success. He painted birds and fish, and was especially fond of cocks and hens, rejoicing in their vigorous plumage and variegated mottlings. His colouring, rich and opaque, reminds one of some of the earlier Ming painters, such as Lü Ki. His design is not quite like that of any other Japanese, though it has certain affinities with that of Korin.

Korin himself found a follower in a man of great gift, Watanabe Shiko. It has been generally asserted that the Korin style was not revived till the end of the eighteenth century, when Hoitsu took it up and attracted some accomplished pupils. Shiko, however, if not an actual pupil, was a very near disciple. His manner is distinct from his master's, though the difference is hardly to be put into words. The Chinese element is rather stronger in his painting than in Korin's. Mr. Arthur Morrison has a magnificent pair of screens by Shiko, of "The Four Seasons." The British Museum has a white peony by him, formerly attributed to Korin.

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Although these various masters were working in Kioto on their own independent lines, the main current of Kioto painting appears in the growth of the naturalistic school, called, from a street in the city, the Fourth Street or Shijo school. The Japanese count Goshun as its founder, while the school of Okio is distinguished as the Maruyama school. But the two schools are the outcome of one movement, of which Okio is undoubtedly the originator. Goshun, as we saw, began as a follower of Buson's Chinese style, then worked under Okio. His graceful brush has less fineness and precision than that master's. His followers and successors developed a style in which light, harmonious colouring and an unforced, flexible handling were pursued, in avoidance of the ruggedness and looseness which the Chinese manner was apt to affect. The subjective idealism of the classic schools was discarded, and instead we find Mori Sosen, the incomparable painter of animals, living for months together on fruit and nuts in the woods of Osaka to learn by patient observation the life of the forest monkeys that he loved to paint. Peerless as a painter of monkeys, whether in the rough broad style or in his other minuter manner, in which their hairy coats are rendered with the fidelity and much more than the sensitive life of Dürer's animal studies, Sosen is equally happy in his pictures of shy, delicate-footed deer, of which there

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is an exquisite example in the British Museum, while at South Kensington is a fine picture of peacocks from his brush.

Hoyen is another delightful animal painter, with a humour of his own. Rosetsu puts a touch of oddness and unexpectedness into his animal designs. Mori Ippo is famed for his birds and for his landscapes.

It is sometimes said that the Shijo school avoided the subjects of heroes and sages, and all the legendary lore of the Chinese and Kano schools. They did not often choose these subjects, it is true, but they are by no means unknown to their art. The typical Shijo picture is, however, a nature study; still keeping the singleness of pictorial idea, the charm of design, but emptied of that inner purpose of alliance to a spiritual conception, interpretation, or lofty mood, which was the life of the older schools, and which made their work impressive. We feel some such change as there is between the painting of seventeenth-century Holland and of fifteenth-century Italy.

But meanwhile the Chinese school, which since Ashikaga times had shown but fitful life, had not only received a new impetus from China itself with the advent of Chen Nan-Ping, but was now reinvigorated and transformed by a master of Japanese birth.

Tani Buncho was the son of a poet in Yedo.

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Born in 1768, he lived to 1840. Like Matabei and Sotatsu, he created a style of his own by fusing elements from more than one of the established schools. To the romantic feeling of the Southern school of China he added the nervous, masculine brush-line of the North. And as Yeitoku had infused into the Kano style the strong, opaque colour of Ming, Buncho could at times enrich his art with colour effects which seem influenced by a study of the Tosa classics. Buncho painted birds and flowers, and is famous for his romantic mountain landscapes painted in tones of blue and green alone. Fine as these are, they lack something of the dream-like spaciousness and lofty air of the old Chinese. Buncho is at his finest in his rare pictures of sages and heroes. His painting of Shoki, the demon-queller of Chinese legend, standing on a white floor of cloud in the deep blue spaces of heaven, is nobly conceived and splendid in colour.

The school which Buncho founded tended to coalesce with the Shijo style. But his favourite pupil, Watanabe Kwazan (1793-1841) has a place apart. Kwazan had in his nature no little of the heroic idealism of an earlier and a greater time. In him we recognise one of those devoted spirits who founded the new Japan of our own day. Like other earnest and thoughtful men of his time, he was deeply persuaded of the evil effects on his

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country of the Tokugawa policy of isolation. He learnt Dutch, and published a book advocating the renewal of foreign intercourse. The book brought down on him the Shogun's displeasure. "Fearing lest his conduct might invite some misfortune to the lord whom he served, he put an end to his life." The grief of his devoted band of pupils at his death bears witness to the charm and nobility of his nature.

I have already spoken of Hoitsu, Buncho's contemporary, who at the beginning of the nineteenth century revived with brilliant success the style of Korin. Hoitsu was of noble family, and entered the priesthood, but lived most of his life in retirement dedicated to painting. He studied under more than one master, and tried various styles, but in the end chose that of Korin, in which, indeed, he found a natural affinity. When all allowance is made for the immense debt to a predecessor followed so closely, Hoitsu must be credited with real originality to have retained his own spontaneous gift. As a colourist he almost equals Korin, though it is perhaps inevitable that his choice and delicate art should strike us as a little cold.

The early nineteenth century saw also a rather remarkable revival of the old Tosa style in the hands of a little group of painters, Tanaka Totsugen (d. 1823), Ukita Ikkei (1795-1859), and Reizei



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Tameyasu (1821-1862). These artists, who have been neglected and ignored by most European writers, are highly esteemed by their countrymen. Their work is no mere affectation of archaism; it is full of vigour, and, especially that of Tameyasu, splendid in colour. The movement is of interest and significance, too, in its witness to the strong reaction towards the ancient national ideals of pre-Tokugawa days.

One great painter remains to be mentioned—Yosai, best known by his fine book of portraits of celebrated heroes, “Zenken Kojitsu.” Yosai was born in 1787, and died at a great age in 1878. He was of noble family, and after a training in the Kano style made a prolonged study of all the schools, on which he founded his own independent manner. As a figure-painter he has had extraordinary influence. A Fukurokujiu by him, in the British Museum, is a noble and original conception of the old sage ascending into Paradise and mounting through the mists of heaven.

Zeshin, famous for his lacquer, was also an admirable painter. He died in 1891, aged eighty-five. Kiosai (b. 1831, d. 1889) was a master of the humorous sketch, no unworthy successor to one side at least of Hokusai's genius.

Since the revolution of 1868 there have been a number of painters who have deserted their native tradition, working more or less in the Western

PLATE XXVIII

TIGER

BY GANKU

*British Museum*







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style and using the medium of oil. A kind of oil-painting has been known in Japan from quite early times, but has found scarcely any practitioners. In the seventeenth century a certain artist, called Yamada Emosaku, learnt the European method from the Dutch. He was a Christian, and during the persecution of the Christians in that period he distinguished himself by his heroic defence of a fortress. He would have been put to death, but his bravery and his skill as a painter saved his life. A screen \* by his hand is extant, which seems to be adapted from a European print. It represents two princes on horseback on a terrace. On the caparison of the horse of one of them is a shield with the arms of France and Navarre, which identifies the rider almost certainly as Antoine de Bourbon, father of Henri IV. The other is probably François, Duc de Guise.

But the oil medium has never proved congenial. The hybrid productions of artists of the present era of Meiji have no real felicity. And in recent years a return has been made by the more gifted artists to the old native style, even when treating European subjects. I have seen a striking picture of Diogenes in his tub by a living and still young painter, Shimomura Kanzan, in which the head of the sage, with a suggestion of the tub from

\* Reproduced in the *Kokka*, No. 138. I am indebted for the identification to Mr. Max Rosenheim.

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which he gazes, is treated like that of some Daruma or Jurojin of Eastern legend. For the future of Japanese painting I will venture no prophecy. Hard as it may be to withstand in art the Western influences which have transformed to so great an extent the external conditions of life, I fervently hope that those influences will be withstood, and that the artists of Japan will realise how it is only by being true to its own ancient and inbred traditions that their art can worthily rival the art of Europe.

## CHAPTER XVII. UKIYOYÉ AND THE COLOUR-PRINT

UKIYOYÉ in its later phases, as we know it in the manifold production of the colour-print designers, was an art made by artisans for the people. But it had its origin, as we have seen, in the aristocratic schools. For the early days of the Tokugawa rule were days of liberation, when for the first time the nobles took part in the common life and shared the pleasures of the people. Events had, to a certain extent, remoulded society. During the desolating civil wars the court had known poverty and wretchedness; humanity had invaded its seclusion, with its suffering and its pity. Again, Hideyoshi had risen from low origin to be Regent of the empire, and among his captains were many of obscure rank and birth. When, therefore, under the power of Tokugawa Iyeyasu, peace was consolidated, a single current of ideas could pervade the whole nation. A genial influence melted for the moment old barriers of caste. Relief from the long strain of war and danger brought about an extravagant reaction. It was an age of joy and festival. The new capital of Yedo grew fast; commerce thrived in her streets with the sense of security gained; the middle and lower



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classes of the nation woke to a consciousness of national life and to a sense of the pleasures of art. So arose Ukiyoyé, a mirror of popular life in all its freedom and variety such as the art of no other country in the world can show.

Under the later Tokugawa Shoguns conditions changed again, and class distinctions became once more rigid—so rigid, in fact, that the populace were cut off from the samurai and the nobles, and lived a life absolutely their own and apart. Ukiyoyé became more and more confined to the artisan; and in spite of Hokusai and Hiroshige, the nineteenth century is in the main a record of its degeneracy.

Matabei was of samurai family, and his subjects were drawn from the middle classes rather than the populace. But only a few years after his death in 1650 there arose an artist who was to be typical of the men of Ukiyoyé as we know it, and who ranks as the second founder of the school. This was Hishikawa Moronobu.\* He was the son of an embroiderer, and began life as a pattern designer. He then studied painting, and became an admirable master of the brush. As a painter he was considerably influenced by that brilliant and

\* Moronobu is usually said to have died in 1714, aged seventy-seven. There is recorded, however, in 1695, what seems to be an allusion to his recent death. Mr. Tajima therefore inclines to think that he died in 1694.

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unorthodox Kano painter, Hanabusa Itcho. But for the future his importance lay rather in his discovery of the uses of the woodcut in popular art. Woodcut native images of deities and saints had from early times served the same purpose as the prints of Helgen in fifteenth-century Germany. There had been, too, woodcut illustrations to books. Moronobu's innovation was the issue of picture-books (*E-hon*), in which the text was quite subsidiary to the illustration, and of single-sheet prints. And whereas Matabei was unconscious that his work was to form the foundation of a new tradition, Moronobu claimed to be the originator of a school, and styled himself Yamato artist.

An event which was of enormous consequence as a factor in the productions of this popular school was the establishment of the regular theatre, distinguished from the old lyrical drama called *No*, archaic in its severe conventions as early Greek tragedy, which alone found favour with the aristocratic class. In the theatre, to which Japan's first great actor, Danjuro, ancestor of a line of actors still flourishing to-day, gave lustre, the Ukiyoyé artists found endless material, not only in scenes from famous plays, but in the portraits of famous actors. These latter were sold in their thousands, as photographs and picture postcards in Europe of to-day. And competing with these were the

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portraits of famous beauties of the Yoshiwara, the courtesan-city without the gates of Yedo, women who, like the hetairæ of Periclean Athens, were sometimes among the most accomplished of their day, versed in poetry and music.

The history of Ukiyoyé reflects within itself the history of Japanese art as a whole. It is the history of a number of artist families, each keeping mainly to one class of subject ; but it is continually complicated by the fact that when one family line was enfeebled or exhausted, the tradition was often taken up and revived by a man from an opposed school ; or, again, the power of a particular master in one school would attract to his style the pupils of many other schools.

We must at the outset distinguish between two main streams : between those who were chiefly or exclusively painters and those who were chiefly print-designers. The painters were the more fastidious in their subjects, and notably avoided the stage. Of these the first was Miyagawa Choshun, ranked by native critics as the best of all Ukiyoyé painters. He was certainly a charming colourist. Born in 1682, he was a younger contemporary of Moronobu. He designed no prints.

Following up the school of Moronobu, we trace step by step the evolution of the colour-print. Brocade-print, *nishiki-yé*, is the Japanese name.

Moronobu's pupil, Kiyonobu, the first of the

PLATE XXIX

DEER

BY SOSEN

*British Museum*



祖仙寫圖





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Torii line, a family which for several generations played a strong part in Ukiyoyé, is credited with the first advance from the hand-coloured proof to the print in which colour was applied by pressure from the wood block. At first two colours only besides the black outline, a rose \* and a green tint, were employed ; and a wonderful variety of harmonies was developed within this simple scale. Next a third block was added, and other colours used as well as or instead of the green and rose. At last Harunobu went further, increasing the number of blocks to complete his design with background and atmosphere, and the colour-print in its full splendour was evolved.

It seems to be established beyond dispute that this last step of Harunobu's dates from 1764. But the date of the first simple colour-print is not easy to arrive at. Mr. Fenollosa has satisfied himself that 1742 or 1743 is the earliest date we are at liberty to assume. But this late date can hardly be maintained, for Kiyonobu, who certainly made many colour-prints, is recorded by the Japanese "Dictionary of National Biography" as having died on July 28, 1729, at the age of sixty-six, and been buried in the graveyard of the Hoshoji Temple at Asakusa. But in any case we are met with difficulties. The hardest thing to understand is that the Japanese were so slow in arriving at the

\* Called *beni*; it is identical with the "rouge" used in Europe.



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complete print, when the Chinese had produced examples, not less elaborate than those of Harunobu, in the century preceding. Little is known about Chinese prints, but a short time ago I had the good fortune to discover in the MSS. department of the British Museum a number of colour woodcuts which were in the Sloane collection, and have therefore been in the Museum since its foundation. Of these the most remarkable are a set of prints\* of flower arrangements, flowers and birds, &c., printed from many blocks, with all the refinements of embossing and superposition of tints which we associate with the final stage of colour-printing in Japan. These were brought home by Kaempfer, the historian of Japan, in 1692, and as there is no record of his touching anywhere in China on his voyage, it seems likely that these woodcuts came from Japan, though certainly of Chinese workmanship. It is hard to believe that the Chinese invention was not known in Japan; we have, in fact, evidence that Chinese colour-prints were known to the Japanese before the middle of the eighteenth century, since Shunboku published in 1746 a book printed in several colours which is a copy of a Chinese book published in 1702.

\* For a description of these and other Chinese colour-prints see the *Burlington Magazine*, April 1907. I have there suggested that the cheapness of the prints accounts for so few being preserved.

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The fact remains that in Yedo at any rate, whether the process was known or not, it was not taken advantage of. The stages by which the Ukiyoyé designers reached the full colour-print were strangely long and slow, whatever hypothesis we adopt as to dates. If Mr. Fenollosa's date, 1743, be adopted as the date of the earliest two-colour print, it seems odd that the further step should not have been taken, with so many busy rivals at work for twenty-two years. It seems odder still that they should have taken sixty years about it, if we assume the beginning of the century as our date for the first use of colour blocks. Yet oddest of all would it seem, if we returned to Mr. Fenollosa's dates, that the Yedo artists should have been so slow to make the obvious transition from hand-tinted proofs to colour-printing, especially when the complete process had been practised, probably for a century at least, in China.

We must leave the matter as it stands. The history of human inventions is full of similar singularities. How many discoveries, now in universal practical use, were made in principle centuries ago, yet left unutilised! We may illustrate even from the history of colour-printing in Europe. In Germany, the home of the woodcut, the idea of colour-printing was brought to practice at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Yet

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very few colour-prints were made, though the existence of one cut printed in eight colours shows that the possibilities of the process were not ignored. In Italy, about the same time, colour blocks were also used, but Ugo da Carpi did not go beyond two or three tints; the process was dropped for a century, and only revived sporadically in Europe till the nineteenth century.

But it is time to return to the Ukiyoyé artists. We have, then, during the first half of the century, Kiyonobu and his pupils devoting themselves to theatrical prints; Okumura Masanobu and his pupils beginning to explore the field of daily life, while not neglecting the fame of noted actors or Yoshiwara beauties; the school of Choshun proudly confining itself to painting; while a few, like Sukenobu, worked almost entirely for picture-books, for which the occupations of women—girls, all sweetness and innocence, to look upon, at any rate—provided endless and monotonous material. With Harunobu (1718–1770) we arrive at the complete colour-print. But we arrive also at one of the most seductive artists of Japan. Avoiding the stage, Harunobu charms us at once by his subjects. Who can paint more delightfully than he the maidens of his native land? He has a passion for the shyness, the sweetness, the slimness of adolescence; for fragile figures sensitive to the

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finger-tips of little hands on wrists as slender as stalks of autumn crocus, and even when swaying and bent with emotion, showing hardly more in their soft small faces than flowers do in the wind. We seem to hear the delicate clatter of their pattens as they walk among the irises or the lespedeza bushes, or cross some snow-covered garden bridge, the close skirts clinging round their knees as they take their short, tripping steps. Young lovers, too, Harunobu understands, and is intimate with their moods. Many of his prints bear verses inscribed at the top, which interpret them. We see the tea-house girl, pausing in her work to think of the youth who has come once or twice and captured her heart, but has had no thought of her (she fears)—gone like the cuckoo's cry, one moment near and the next far away. We see the maid blowing soap-bubbles for the delight of her dancing baby brother; and though her will be set to withstand the magic of love (says the verse), yet the wind from the blossoming plum boughs will not suffer her to be at peace, and her white thoughts are flushed and perfumed. We see young lovers in the moonlit garden saying farewell. "I have broken off a flowering branch," the youth whispers, "and now that I have broken it, it is dearer than ever." The young mother, too, half hidden under the folds of the green mosquito-net, playing with

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her baby ; the young mistress parting the sliding-door of her room in the early morning, the delicate ankles showing under her white night-dress, to find her little waiting-maid huddled asleep on the floor ; geisha-girls gazing out to sea, where the distant sails are, or watching the gay boats on the Sumida river from the verandah ; a damsel humorously regarding the pretty shape that the shadow\* of herself and her umbrella make on the snow ; merry children wrestling, playing games, or making a huge snow-dog ; all these are of Harunobu's spring-time world. And with all this delicacy and feminine charm, what power is in Harunobu's design ! What force and variety in his colour ! He loves the tender tones of grey, and rose, and soft yellow ; but he strikes in a rich apple-green, a crimson, a chocolate-red, with confident success. His colour-schemes are matter for perpetual study, his designs not less so. His faculty seems inexhaustible in its freshness. It is rarely that one finds more than two or three copies of the same print in going through half a dozen collections, containing thirty to fifty examples each. Could we see his entire production we should be astounded.

Harunobu's work was continued by Koriūsai,

\* An instance of the way in which the Oriental artist uses the cast shadow for his own purpose, in spite of traditional convention.

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who followed in his steps so closely that at times the prints of the two are scarcely distinguishable. Koriusai excelled in the tall narrow prints made for the posts of houses (*hashira-kake*), and designed some fine prints of landscape, birds, and flowers.

Meanwhile a young artist from the painter-school of Choshun had come to invade the declining Torii school of theatrical print design. This was Shunsho. Using Harunobu's methods, Shunsho re-created the actor print, and produced an infinite array of portraits of actors in character—playing both male and female parts, for the Japanese theatre, like the Elizabethan, had no actresses—and if inevitably monotonous in subject, displayed within these set limits great freshness and masterly draughtsmanship.

With the seventh decade of the century a yet greater figure comes into view, and soon establishes an undisputed sovereignty—Kiyonaga, a scion by adoption of the old Torii line. No kind of Ukiyoyé subject was untouched by Kiyonaga: the actor print, the domestic genre of Harunobu, scenes and figures from the heroic periods, and above all the rich, gay outdoor life of Yedo, its processions, its festivals, all the countless ceremonies of the New Year, picnics and excursions to view the cherry-blossom on green knolls above the Sumida banks, the loiterers in temple

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precincts, groups in restaurant gardens, music parties in house-boats on the river, visits to the sea-shore at the favourite rocky islet of Enoshima, to which at low tide a pathway crosses the sands. Kiyonaga is wonderful in his night scenes. He excels in three-sheet prints, with figures large in proportion to the frame. In the use of masses of black, as in his strength of sweeping line, he is without a rival; and his tall figures, beautiful in their stately attitudes, are of a noble type. A certain aristocracy of temper pervades his designs, of whatever subject.

The triumphant power of Kiyonaga attracted followers from all the schools of Ukiyoyé. Shuncho and Shunman, to mention only these, were fine artists who merged their own individuality almost wholly in his style. But three men who fell under the same sway rose to independent mastery, and worked as rivals in the next following period; these are Yeishi, a deserter from the Kano school of painting, Utamaro, and Toyokuni. Fine as Yeishi can be—and the best of his prints, such as the series that illustrate the Genji Monogatari, rank with the masterpieces of Ukiyoyé—he was not the potent personality that Utamaro proved. Utamaro in his latter days, passed, as we know, in the Yoshiwara, declined and fell away; his passion for women became a kind of madness that infected his art, making him turn

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the representation of men's work and occupations into feminine shapes ; his hand was enfeebled, as his bodily powers were exhausted. We note, too, a tendency to distortion of feature in the effort after emphasis and accentuation. But in the prime of his enormous production Utamaro was unsurpassed. If he has not the serene beauty of Kiyonaga's humanity, if he introduces an element of violence and at times of something sinister, he has a stronger sense for the dynamic in figure-drawing, and greater resource of composition. His versatility was immense. His book of flowers and insects is an exquisite work, delicately drawn with the finest observation ; yet in the portrait-busts of beauties, by which he is most universally known, how large is his boldness, what force is in his style ! How magnificent is his treatment of the masses of black hair ! How expressive his line is of living flesh and blood ! In the sets of prints illustrating that favourite subject of his, the life of the strong boy Kintoki and his wild mother of the mountains, Utamaro is at his most original, soars highest above the common world of Ukiyoyé. His famous triptych of Awabé Fishers ("Les Plongeuses") is one of the great and rare classics of colour-printing. It holds its own with Greek design.

Yet it is true that we have passed the meridian of Ukiyoyé. Toyokuni, a lesser man than



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Utamaro, an artist of strong gift but a nature of no fine fibre, easily yielding to popular demands, was in the main current of the decline and degradation. He too, at his best, can hold his own with greater men for vigour; but it is from his school that was poured the torrential production of squinting actors and grimacing women in variegated loudness of design and colour which made the last stages of Ukiyoyé an abomination.

The two most eminent of Toyokuni's pupils were Kunisada and Kuniyoshi. Of these, Kunisada is the more celebrated, but unjustly. Kunisada did much able work, though the mass of his prints is merely commercial and disfigured by over-emphasis of every kind. Kuniyoshi, on the other hand, stands by himself; he breaks free from his school, and in his own province, the dramatic, rises to great heights. His preferred subjects are heroic: the feats of old Chinese warriors, the deeds of the Forty-seven Ronins, above all the fierce combats, the sieges, the ambushes, of the civil wars of the Middle Ages, the triumphs and disasters of Yoshitsune, of Nitta, of Masashige, of Takauji.

Such subjects as that sudden vision of horror on a moonlit winter night, beheld by the Taira chief Kiyomori, when all the snowy mounds and shrubs of his garden took on the aspect of heaped

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skulls of spectral enemies; or the slain hosts of Taira rising from the waves about the ship of Yoshitsune; or the defence of the Emperor's person in the barricaded temple of Rokuhara; or the last fight of Masatsura, when he and his two friends take the bodies of the slain upon their shoulders to shield them from the thick storm of arrows; such subjects as these are after Kuniyoshi's own heart. Whatever faults these prints have—and they are not, of course, to be compared with the battles of Keion and Korehisa—they show astonishing powers of design. And in the rare print of Nichiren, the famous exiled saint in a snowy landscape, Kuniyoshi rises to nobility.

In this realm of dramatic imagination only one man of Ukiyoyé could match Kuniyoshi, and even he has not left us such splendid dramatic pages—I mean the greatest, most various, and most puissant spirit of them all, Hokusai.

With Hokusai we move away from the main tradition of Ukiyoyé, now hastening to its riot of decay, into an ampler, wider world. It was in landscape, with Hokusai and with Hiroshige, that Ukiyoyé was to renew itself and complete the round of its achievement. Not that Hokusai was not a great master of the figure. But with all his knowledge of humanity, all his mastery of the human form, all his immense resource in composition, he has left few figure-subjects in

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which the essential powers of his genius are concentrated into the unity and perfection that make a classic, as compared with the masterpiece on masterpiece that overwhelm us in his landscapes.

The story of his life has been often told. Born in 1760, he was a pupil of Shunsho, and under the name Shunro produced graceful prints in his master's style. But his independent spirit asserted itself; the two quarrelled, and the pupil was expelled. Hokusai was driven to various shifts to make a living, and was at one time a pedlar in the Yedo streets. Then he procured work as a book-illustrator and designed a vast number of *surimono*, those messages of good luck, invitations, or announcements sent by the Japanese to their friends, chiefly at the New Year; small woodcuts printed with especial care and daintiness. Inexhaustible in fancy and full of charm as these *surimono* are, they give but a hint of the mature strength of the artist. Hokusai reminds us of Rembrandt in the steady ripening of his powers from youth to age; of Turner in the means he took to found his art on a basis of infinite and untiring observation. Hokusai surpassed even Turner in his industry. He could hardly stop drawing to take a meal; he had no time to untie the packets of money with which he was paid, but handed one of them unopened to

PLATE XXX  
CHERRY-TREES IN BLOSSOM AT SHINAGAWA

By HOKUSAI

*J. Martin White Collection*

The two portions complete the picture







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the tradesmen whose bills were due. They came back for more if the sum proved not enough; not otherwise. No wonder that in spite of raging industry he was always poor. Unlike his countrymen, he was careless of his surroundings. When his lodgings grew intolerably dirty he could not stay to tidy them, but hired others. He moved house ninety-three times in the course of his ninety years. At seventy-five his thoughts were all of the future. He had learnt something of the structure of nature and her works, he wrote; "but when I am eighty I shall know more; at ninety I shall have got to the heart of things; at a hundred I shall be a marvel; at a hundred and ten every line, every blot of my brush will be alive!" He now signed his work "The Old Man with a Mania for Drawing." On his death-bed he sighed, "If Heaven had given me ten more years!" and at the very end, "Five more years, and I should have indeed become a painter!" It was May 1849. It is the custom with the Japanese, even with criminals condemned to execution, to make a little poem before dying. Hokusai's was this: "Now my soul, a will o' the wisp, can flit at ease over the summer fields!"

Greatly was this great artist rewarded for his unceasing and laborious cultivation of his gift. His paintings, fine as some of them are, represent him less truly and far less adequately than the



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woodcuts made from his designs. In the "Mangwa," or collection of studies and sketches, a series published in fifteen volumes, the first of which appeared in 1817 or earlier, the vast range of his observation is displayed. Nothing in nature escapes his "devouring eye and portraying hand": mountains, rivers, trees, birds, fishes, animals, insects; the forms of breaking waves, flowers, rocks, and ships, buildings, utensils; men and women in every kind of occupation—all workaday Japan; comic and fantastic figures; even gods, saints, heroes, warriors, dragons, and fabulous beasts; all take life under his restless brush. The "Hundred Views of Fuji," printed in black and grey, appeared in 1834; while to the twenties and thirties belong the sets of colour-prints on which Hokusai's fame chiefly rests, the "Thirty-six Views of Fuji," the "Bridges," the "Waterfalls," the "Hundred Poems explained by the Nurse," the "Flowers," the "Ten Poets of China and Japan"; this last set, which is very rare, being in some ways the crown and climax of them all.

I have said that Hokusai reminds us of Turner in the unweariable industry of his eye and hand. He was like Turner in his effort to realise the quantity of fact in nature, an effort corresponding to the genius of the times in Europe, and symptomatic even in Japan of the new spirit which was to come to its own in our day.

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Hokusai allowed no such profusion of accumulated material in the great landscapes of his maturity as Turner did; yet in some of Turner's noblest water-colours, in the "Blue Righi" and the "Red Righi," for instance, we find a curious parallel in simplicity of design and choice of colour-scheme to some of the famous prints of this unknown and unguessed-at contemporary. Who that has seen a fine impression of the "Fuji in Fine Weather," the vast ruddy cone sweeping up from fringes of dim forest into a sky of clear blue barred with white cloud, or "Fuji from the Hollow of the Wave," with its monstrous billow-toppling heavy-crested over the rowers huddling in their boat below (to name two alone of the famous Fuji series), or the "Waterfalls," or the book called "Hokusai Gwashiki," with its marvellous desolate snow scenes, or the finest of the "Bridges" and the "Hundred Poems Interpreted"—who can doubt that the creator of these designs is among the greatest landscape artists of the world? The audacity with which he eliminates whatever weakens or distracts from the central interest of the design is superb. He brings in a cloud of the old Tosa convention, a solid band with neatly defined edges, where he chooses. The intricacy and profusion of nature's forms and hues are reduced to a scheme of definite outlines and definite colours, vivid tones of blue, green, yellow,

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relieved by white, and frequently opposed by masses of light red. The limitations of the wood block conditioned his designs, and by an enthusiastic acceptance of those limitations he achieves a marvellous success. These landscapes are something quite new in Oriental art. The effect is one of strangeness, a shock of beauty and surprise at once. We feel that the world holds more wonders than we dreamed of, sources of power and exhilaration which Hokusai has revealed, and which we may go on to discover for ourselves. These prints are far removed indeed from the majestic reverie, the aerial vista, the lofty contemplation of the great landscape art of China. The Japanese mind is, I think, at bottom, rather witty than poetical in temper; and Hokusai is a true Japanese. The spirit which informs his work is no longer the spirit of fastidious choice, but of frank acceptance of the world as it is. Nothing is common to him; the incongruous stimulates instead of displeasing him. In one of his views of Fuji, the distant mountain is seen through the vast hoop of a cask which a cooper is busily making; in another the huge stacks of a timber yard form the foreground; in another, the plight of travellers on a windy road, with their clothes blown in their faces and their hats flying off, is depicted with the enjoyment of a Rowlandson. Hokusai finds nothing in nature or

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mankind irrelevant to the purposes of what, after all, becomes a design of real grandeur. I have no doubt that in our day he would have made of the poles and wires of electric trams material for beauty.

It is this frank and joyous acceptance of the world as it is which attracts modern Europe to Hokusai. It chimes with the prevailing temper of our day. Yet if we turn back to an earlier page of art, to Yeitoku, to So-ami, to Nobuzane, we feel at once that something has been lost. Old and effete conventions, many will say, which it was Hokusai's glory to supersede. But no, the loss is much more than that. Hokusai broadens the bounds of Japanese art, but there are heights he never reaches, moods he is incapable of possessing. If he reminds us of Rembrandt by the breadth of his interest, he has little or none of the tragic insight, the pathos, and deep tenderness of the Dutchman, to whom also his vivid sense of fun and quick-witted alertness are quite alien. The work of the older masters seems slight and limited compared with his; yet theirs is a world of finer senses, of subtler emotions, of more serious soul. The difference cannot be explained in words. M. Gonse has in his collection two paintings of a plum-branch, one by the fifteenth-century master, Soga Jasōku, the other by Hokusai. One must have some such tangible

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comparison before one to understand what Japanese critics mean when they insist on nobility and "lofty tone" in a picture. It is like the difference in "accent" by which Matthew Arnold sought to distinguish among the great poets, but which he could only explain by examples. It is at bottom a difference in attitude of mind rather than of technique; yet we can never really separate the two, and Hokusai's brush-work tells its tale also. His line is jagged and restless; one may see in it a conscious revolt from the long curves and languid rhythms of Utamaro and his peers. Admirably as his figures are placed in landscape, sometimes with real nobility—I would instance especially the set of prints of the "Ten Poets," and among them that poet on a snowy promontory which by French collectors is called *Le Pèlerin*—his figures in themselves are too often defaced by mannerism. He is fond of a strange type, with low, receding forehead and grinning jaw. His fantastic whiskered warriors are referred by European writers to Chinese prototypes, but are like nothing in Chinese art. In the British Museum is a picture of demons trying to bend the bow of the famous archer Tametomo; and here the mannerism of Hokusai's figure-drawing is almost painful, while the pigment is coarse and the colouring hot. For all that, his figures are always alive.

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It is necessary to understand Hokusai's deficiencies; for even though we may think him a mightier artist than any of his predecessors, it is not true that he represents the climax of Japanese art, the final genius for whom all those predecessors were preparing. He represents rather a breaking away from those long-maintained traditions, as he lived in a society cut off from those old ideals. When we have followed the course of Japanese painting through the centuries, and become familiar with its aspirations and achievements, we can understand why the Japanese themselves deny a place among their very greatest to Hokusai, even though we can recognise that prejudice has something to do with that denial. When Mr. Joseph Pennell tells us that Daniel Vierge is a greater artist than Raphael, we are most of us irritated and indignant; and part of our feeling is due to a reluctance to allow that an illustrator in black and white can be judged on equal terms with a painter. This is perhaps a prejudice; but I would point out that Hokusai's real claims are based on cheap colour-prints, while painting in the East has the same prestige that it has in the West. But prejudice apart, let us confess that the Japanese have a right to be indignant when European writers announce to them that they don't understand their own

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art, that a mere habit of idolatry explains their admiration of Mitsunaga and Sesshiu and Motonobu, and that Hokusai is by far their greatest master. In criticising an art that is quite new to us, and where there are no established authorities, we have courage to express our genuine opinions. I have no doubt that a great many people of to-day really and at heart rank the human interest, the lively and genial observation, of a Dickens above the majesty of a Milton. I confess myself of the contrary opinion ; I confess, too, that some of the old Chinese pictures have given me deeper and more intimate pleasure than even the splendid masterpieces of Hokusai. Yet masterpieces these are. If we have to make detractions from Hokusai, we have to make them too from giants like Rubens in painting, giants like Byron in literature. Some last charm, some final loveliness is absent. But, on the other hand, how would life be poorer without the exultant and for us the exhilarating power of these tremendous personalities !

The invasion of landscape by Ukiyoyé in Hokusai was continued by Hiroshige. We must note as significant a total change in attitude from that of the classic landscape painters. The Ashikaga and later Kano masters painted landscape as the Chinese had done, in the spirit of

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a communion with the life in nature, as material for the expression of a mood or an emotion. Ukiyoyé landscape has its roots, like our own English landscape, in topography. The classic masters cared nothing for the individual place: it was the universal features of earth and air that moved them; and, as we have seen, they preferred to paint the imagined scenery of China to that of their native land. But with the early nineteenth century came a passion on the populace of Yedo for pictures of the beauties of their own country; a symptom of the thirst for facts, the knowledge of actualities, pervading the people, which was preparing the way for the overthrow of the Tokugawa policy of isolation, for the era of Meiji and the acceptance of Western science. Illustrated guide-books abounded. Hokusai's landscapes, though so original and often bizarre in effect, were illustrations of renowned views and favourite resorts of the excursion-loving people. Hiroshige now took up the work, and produced an endless series of colour-prints depicting many times over views of Yedo, views of Kioto, views on the famous high-roads, the Tokaido and the Kisokaido, and the inevitable views of Fuji.

After the audacities and heroic simplicities of Hokusai's landscape, it is a fall to Hiroshige, who is interested in smaller things, and who



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has far less sense for the elemental forces in nature. And yet what a delightful art is his! He is less concerned with the stable rudiments of earth than with the beauties of their veiling by the atmosphere and changing light. No one has revealed to us so freshly the beauty of rain; rain showering like light javelins that shine in the returning sun, or mingling with the mist and with the wind that bends and tosses a long ridge of blotted pines, or descending in straight rods that hiss on ground or water, or trailing delicate threads that caress the trembling willows. It is incredible how, with four or five colours, crude rather than subtle in themselves, and with only such gradation of flat tint as wiping of the block is capable of, he can bring to our eyes so living an impression of the beauty of twilight, when the last glow fades on the horizon of vast prospects over coast and islands and sea of deepening blue, or of moon-rise among great avenues of enormous pines, or of night and stars, or of the flush and sparkle of changing weather among the mountains, or of the falling snow on white knolls and steep slopes above blue gulfs of sea. Hiroshige loves to depict fireworks illuminating the night sky over the Sumida, the crowd of boats on the water, the thronged spectators on the great arch of the Riogoku Bridge. In pictures like

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the "Battersea Bridge," now in the Tate Gallery, Whistler takes a Hiroshige motive, and even his method of composition, and translates it into a vision of his own. Of all Japanese artists Hiroshige is the one whose influence has been widest on the painting of the West.

## CHAPTER XVIII. CONCLUSION

**T**HE colour-prints of Ukiyoyé were the first revelation to Europe of the pictorial art of Japan. Ignorant of all that lay behind these strange, new, ravishing harmonies of line and colour, enthusiasts were prompted sometimes to imagine that here at last was an ideal art, produced by men who were concerned solely with problems of decorative design, indifferent to subject. And under this spell there are those in Europe who imagine that our artists should do likewise.

Yet I am convinced that the finest decorative design has never been produced by men whose conscious aim was solely directed to that end. Two powers are present in the forming of a work of art : creative instinct and conscious intelligence. Two aims are present also : the achievement of beauty in design and the realisation of the life and character in men and things. Success is likeliest when the design comes mainly of the creative instinct and the conscious intelligence is devoted mainly to the realisation of life. With the Ukiyoyé artists this was the case. They were enormously interested in the life around them, not less so than the Dutchmen of the seventeenth century, and they set to work to mirror that life, at least the gay and

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sensuous side of it, in all its detail and variety. But they had this great good fortune, that their path was prepared and their problem infinitely simplified. A strict convention was prescribed them, by which they were relieved from all the difficult and entangling complexities of light and shade. Their mode of design was an inheritance from long ages of production ; it was for the individual to refine and vary on themes of rhythm and balance already found for them by the race. This definite and accepted circumscription proved the artist's liberation. His energies were not absorbed in the intellectual effort of translating the common scene into pictorial terms, a problem which in Europe of to-day each painter must practically set about solving afresh for himself ; but, this translation having been effected for him by the inherited habit of his national art, he was free to invent new harmonies of line and colour on the old basis, and at the same time, within the given limits, to exercise his interest in life and character.

The Ukiyoyé artists were picturing a time with all the manners, occupations, and amusements of its men and women. The value of their work, as art, lies not in this, but in the infinite harmonies of line and colour they created ; yet their conscious motive, as I have said, was not to make decorative arrangements so much as to picture the life around them. The Japanese themselves have been in the

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habit of despising the whole school of Ukiyoyé; and though the causes of this contempt are complex, and partly on the score of art, the main prejudice against the colour-prints is that they remind Japan of a period of degradation, effeminacy, and excess. To our eyes they seem to picture a fairy-land of beauty, removed from gross realities, and we scarcely concern ourselves with the conditions of life underlying it. But to the Japanese, accustomed to nothing more realistic than the pictorial conventions that Ukiyoyé adheres to, the colour-prints are as vivid a picture of an epoch as Dutch genre is to us of seventeenth-century Holland.

And here I would like to ask a question. If we compare Dutch genre-painting with Ukiyoyé, what does the latter lack as a representation of the life of a period which the former gives us? Ukiyoyé does not give us effects of light and shade, but these can be seen wherever the sun shines. It does not give us the texture of stuffs and surfaces; it is arbitrary in its types of face and proportions of figure, which vary with each artist's ideal. But if we regard its production from the standpoint of historical interest, quite apart from its value as art, we must confess that it presents us with a far completer picture of the life of a time than does the genre-painting of the Dutchmen. But then we must add that the life depicted by Ukiyoyé is far richer and more beauti-

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ful in itself. It is a life in which immemorial custom, ceremony, superstition, poetry, legend are like closely interwoven threads making up a many-coloured web. Take almost any print, search out the meanings implied in its subject and accessories, and you will find yourself tracking, by intricate association and allusion, some habit of thought consecrated by a thousand-year-old poem, or be brought back to contemplate the deed of a mediæval hero, or the saying of an Indian saint, or the precept of a Chinese sage. You cannot detach one of these prints from the life that produced it; some tender filament or clinging root binds it to a nation's living heart.

Is it not here that our art of to-day fails in Europe? Our art tends more and more to be detached from the common life, to be dissociated from things of use, to become an affair of museums and exhibitions. This is all part of a wide tendency. The Japanese do not seem to understand an ideal till they have put it into practice. We in the West seem, on the contrary, to think that an ideal practised is no longer an ideal; it is regarded as too good for daily use and in danger of profanation. Is it not so with our religious ideals? Just in the same spirit we hang on walls porcelain plates that are thought too beautiful to eat from, though made for no other purpose. We fill a museum with fine works from divers countries, and place it

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in the midst of streets that desolate eye and heart, without an effort to make them part of the beauty we desire. Art is not an end in itself, but a means to beauty in life. This we forget.

I have been told that a certain Japanese artist, who was studying in London, entered one of our chief art schools. On one occasion the subject of Joan of Arc was set as a theme for competition among the students. What was his amazement to discover that, in attempting such a subject, all that was thought requisite was to pose a model and paint her in armour. To him it seemed that no one could embody in a picture even the least profound conception of a soul incomparable in loftiness and simplicity without weeks of solitary thought, without a strenuous inner preparation, if not with prayer and fasting. We know what is applauded as the "conscientious" treatment of such a subject. The painter studies the period, finds a suit of armour of the right date (which usually turns out to be a little wrong), journeys to Domrémy or Rouen to make careful studies for his scene, perhaps chooses a peasant girl of the Maid's own district for his model; and what energy is left from these labours and the work of elaborating his design he devotes to his conception of an heroic soul. A genius of exceptional intensity may, indeed, build on such foundations to magnificent effect, but only one in ten thousand.

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It was not by such means that Giotto, that Rembrandt, went to the heart of the Gospel stories. And for most the process means absolute defeat. The spirit sets out to conquer matter, and by matter it is conquered. Yet only in the victory of the spirit can art prevail.

The Oriental painter who desires to portray the image of a figure standing in the history of his own lands with such a radiance as Joan of Arc seeks not in outward relics of the past, but in his own heart.

The image of his painting will be perhaps the actual work of a few minutes, but he will not put brush to paper till his mind is saturated with his vision, till the intense emotion it is charged with can be contained no longer. Slight to appearance may be the result; but what a man puts into his work is there, and will be felt by all capable of the feeling that possessed himself, though from the profane it keeps its secret.

In the art of Sung and Ashikaga, those flowering times of the Asian genius, the work of the painter's hand was not conceived of as something objectively complete. Like a drama on the stage which requires a responsive audience before its capacities can be known, it took perfect life only in the beholder's mind. Not to build a tangible monument to his own powers was the artist's dream, but to create a beauty in the lives of men.



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He looked, it may be, to that ideal state, never actually attainable, when men should no more talk of art than the healthy talk of health, because the beauty that had been sought through many images had been found in life itself. But this implies a harmony between painter and spectator, which, alas! no painter can count on with us. The spell of science has corrupted us. We do not ask, before a work of art, "What does this do for me? what does it mean for me as an experience?" but we judge it as a finished, objective achievement, ask whether its anatomy and perspective are correct, attach a moral value to the amount of labour obviously put into it, exercise our intelligence over details—anything rather than let our minds be wisely passive to receive what a true work of art will never give out to those who demand that, without effort or preparation on their part, it shall say all it has to say at once. Masterpieces are fine distinguishers of persons; they will yield all they have to some, while to others they are mute.

If our art ails, it is because our life ails. We shall gain nothing much from the study of the art of China and Japan by trying to adopt, from the outside, beauties of pictorial convention alien to our own modes of vision. But Heaven preserve us from a sterile admiration having its outlet only in a facile and foolish contempt for the achieve-

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ments of Europe. What we can learn is to regain clearness of mind, and dissolve some of the confusion and anarchy which undermine our art; and this is an effort for the public even more than for the painter. If we look back over the whole course of that great Asian tradition of painting which we have been following through the centuries, the art impresses us as a whole by its cohesion, solidarity, order, and harmony. But these qualities are not truly perceived till we know something of the life out of which it flowered. We then see that paintings which in themselves seem slight, light, and wayward are not mere individual caprices, but answer to the common thoughts of men, symbolise some spiritual desire, have behind them the power of some cherished and heart-refreshing ideal, and are supported by links of infinite association with poetry, with religion, yet also with the lives of humble men and women. We shall study this art in vain if we are not moved to think more clearly, to feel more profoundly; to realise, in the unity of all art, the unity of life.



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### CHAPTER II. EARLY ART TRADITIONS IN ASIA

THE discoveries in Khotan are described in detail and illustrated in the two works by Dr. Stein, "Sand-buried Ruins of Khotan" (London, 1903) and "Ancient Khotan" (Detailed Report; 2 vols. Oxford, 1907). A number of the actual objects discovered are exhibited in the Asiatic Saloon of the British Museum.

Grünwedel's "Buddhist Art in India" (the English translation edited by J. Burgess) gives a detailed account of the sculptures of Gandhara, many specimens of which are in the museums of Calcutta and Lahore, in the British Museum, and at Berlin.

A description of the results of the first German expedition to Turfan, with many illustrations, was published by Grünwedel, 1905 ("Bericht über Archäologische Arbeiten in Idikutschari und Umgebung").

Of the more recent researches in Turfan a summary account is given by A. von Le Coq, "Bericht über Reisen und Arbeiten in Chinesisch-Turkistan," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 1907, p. 509. No description of the frescoes, however, is given in this article, though their importance is said to lie in the fact that they prove the religious art of China and Japan to be not autochthonous, but based on Græco-Indian art. It is odd to find this announced as a new discovery; one would have said that it was, on the contrary, a universally accepted belief.

Mr. Griffiths's monumental two volumes on the cave-temples of Ajantâ have been referred to in the text. The author says that the paintings remind him in many ways of Chinese art, and records that Fergusson was of the same opinion, though convinced that nothing in China was so fine. One would like to know what Chinese work formed the basis of these comparisons.

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### CHAPTER III. CHINESE PAINTING IN THE FOURTH CENTURY

Ku K'ai-chih's painting was first described by the present writer in the *Burlington Magazine*, January 1904. A full account of the artist was given by Professor F. Chavannes in the magazine called *Young Pao*, Series II. vol. v. No. 3. See also the pages devoted to him by Giles, "Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art," and Hirth, "Scraps from a Collector's Note-book." Professor Hirth pronounces the Museum painting to be a copy, "probably Japanese"—nothing is less probable—though he has not seen it.

### CHAPTER IV. ORIGINS AND EARLIEST PHASES OF CHINESE PAINTING

For the literary records of early art in China see Professor H. A. Giles, "Introduction, &c." Chapter I.; for the trend of thought and development of ideals see Okakura, "Ideals of the East."

The Wisdom of the East Series, published by Murray, includes the "Sayings of Confucius" and the "Sayings of Lao-tzŭ," both translated and edited by Lionel Giles.

### CHAPTER V. CHINESE PAINTING FROM THE FOURTH TO THE EIGHTH CENTURY

For a fuller and more detailed account of the subjects of Chinese and Japanese art the reader should consult Dr. Anderson's Catalogue of Japanese and Chinese Paintings in the British Museum; also M. Joly's quite recently published "Legend in Japanese Art," London, 1907.

### CHAPTER VI. THE T'ANG DYNASTY

*Chinese Paintings in the British Museum.*

HAN KAN. Boy Rishi riding on a Goat. Anderson, Catalogue, Appendix, No. 8.

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CHAO MÊNG-FU after WANG WEI. Scenes of the Huang Ch'üan. Appendix, No. 260. Acquired since Anderson's Catalogue.

*Paintings reproduced in Tajima's "Select Relics."*

WU TAO-TZŪ. A set of three pictures, representing Sakya-muni, Samantabhadra, and Manjusri. Reproduced in collotype, vol. i. (The central piece, Sakyamuni, is reproduced in colours in the *Kokka*, No. 13.)

WU TAO-TZŪ. A pair of landscapes. Reproduced in collotype, vol. iii. (Also in the *Kokka*, No. 172.)

Cf. also, in vol. x., a painting of the hermit Tekkai, by Wu Wei (d. 1508), who copied the style of Wu Tao-tzū. It is a work of astonishing force.

WANG WEI. Waterfall. (Attributed to Wang Wei.) Reproduced in collotype, vol. ii.

LI CHÊN. Portrait of an Indian Priest, vol. vii.

The name Li Chên is unknown, but the picture (one of a set of seven) was brought to Japan by Kobo Daishi, and is probably the work of a T'ang artist. Another magnificent portrait, of the Chinese priest Tz'ü-ên Ta-shih, reproduced in vol. x., is traditionally ascribed to a master of the T'ang epoch, but is now thought to be by a Japanese working closely in the T'ang style.

## CHAPTER VII. EARLY PERIODS OF PAINTING IN JAPAN

*Paintings in the British Museum.*

HIROTAKE (twelfth century). The Death of Buddha. Catalogued by Anderson as by Lung-mien, Appendix, No. 1.

After HIROTAKE. Set of ten Buddhist subjects. Modern copies, Nos. 68-77.

TAKUMA SHOGE (twelfth century). Aizen Mio-o Buddha. No. 149. Acquired since the Anderson Catalogue.

Tracing from the eighth-century fresco in the Horiuji Temple. No. 148.



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After YESHIN SOZU. Vision of Buddha rising between the Mountains. By Hoitsu. No. 6.

After YESHIN SOZU. The White Path of the Two Rivers. No. 54.

*Paintings reproduced in Tajima's "Select Relics."*

The Tamamushi Tabernacle, vol. ii.

Portrait of Shotoku Taishi. Described in text, p. 85, vol. vi.

Deva (Goddess of Fortune). Described in text, p. 88, vol. ii.

YESHIN SOZU. Vision of Buddha rising between the Mountains, vol. i.

YESHIN SOZU. Amida with the Hosts of Heaven, vol. iv.

TAKUMA SHOGA. Angels of Sun and Moon, vol. vi.

*Paintings reproduced in the "Kokka."*

Fresco in the Horiuji Temple. No. 147.

KANAOKA (attributed to). Portrait of Shotoku. No. 78.

YESHIN SOZU. Bodhisattvas. No. 82.

## CHAPTER VIII. THE KAMAKURA PERIOD

*Japanese Paintings in the British Museum.—Yamato-Tosa School.*

NOBUZANE (thirteenth century). Sambo Kojin, the Spiritual God of the Three Treasures. No. 61. Described as anonymous by Anderson.

After TAKANOBU (twelfth century). Horse-taming. An anonymous seventeenth-century copy of a famous maki-mono, a portion of which is reproduced in the *Kokka*, No. 131. No. 494.

TOSA TAKAMITSU (fourteenth century). The Twelve Deva Kings. Nos. 79 and 80. Ascribed by Anderson to Korehisa.

UNKNOWN ARTIST (fourteenth century). A Buddhist Divinity. No. 89.

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After KOREHISA (fourteenth century). Scenes of Civil War.

No. 500. Acquired since the Anderson Catalogue.

After YOSHIMITSU (fourteenth century). Night March of Demons. No. 262.

TOSA MITSUHIRO (fifteenth century). The Thirteen Buddhas. No. 25.

KASUGA YUKIHIDE (fifteenth century). Amida. No. 153.  
Acquired since the Anderson Catalogue.

Attributed to TOSA HIROCHIKA (fifteenth century). Horses in their Stalls. Nos. 417-428.

### *Paintings reproduced in the "Kokka."*

TOBA SOJO (1053-1140). Frolicking Animals. Satirical pictures. Nos. 22, 115, 133.

" " Scenes from the Shikizan Engi. Nos. 10, 129.

MITSUNAGA (twelfth century). Life of Bandainagon. No. 1.

" " An Invalid Lady and her Friend. No. 55.

" " Scenes from the Terrors of Hell. Nos. 51, 70, 81, 103.

KEION (thirteenth century). Scenes of Civil War. Nos. 16, 136. (See also Tajima, "Select Relics," vol. v. and vol. x.)

NOBUZANE (1177-1265). The Priest Kobo as a Child. No. 42.

" " Portraits of Poets. No. 137.

" " Scenes from Romance and Legend. Nos. 43, 47, 36, 86. (See also Tajima, "Select Relics," vol. iv.)

NAGATAKA (thirteenth century). Scene from the Mongol Invasion. No. 9.

TAKAKANE (fourteenth century). Legend of the Kasuga Shrine. Nos. 31, 140.

" " Scenes from Legend. No. 140.

KOREHISA (fourteenth century). Scenes of Civil War. No. 12.

YUKIHIDE (fifteenth century). Fishing with Cormorants. No. 47.

MITSUNOBU (1434-1525). Festival of the Gion Shrine. No. 118.

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## CHAPTER IX. THE SUNG PERIOD IN CHINA

### *Paintings in the British Museum.*

HUANG CH'ÜAN (O-sen). Fowls and Mallows. Tenth century.

Formerly in the collection of Kano Tanyu. Anderson Catalogue, Appendix, Nos. 4 and 5.

School of LI LUNG-MIEN (Ririumin). Arhats. Catalogued by Anderson as Japanese and attributed to Cho Densu. Nos. 1 and 2.

After LI LUNG-MIEN. The Arhats crossing the Sea. Appendix, No. 97. (Cf. another version, Appendix, No. 97.)

HUI SU (Eiso). Wild Geese. Appendix, No. 3.

MA KUEI (Ba-ki). Hsieh An finishing his Game. Illustrating the story of a famous general who refused to interrupt his game of chequers to hear the news of the victory of his troops. Appendix, No. 297. Acquired since the Anderson Catalogue.

It is unfortunate that the Museum collection contains no specimen of the fine Sung landscape or flower-painting.

### *Paintings reproduced in Tajima's "Select Relics."*

MA YÜAN (Bayen). Landscape. Vol. xi.

HSIA KUEI (Kakei). Landscape. Vol. xi.

MU CH'I (Mokkei). Set of three : Kwannon, Monkeys, Crane. Vol. i.

„ Dragon and Tiger. Vol. ii.

„ Evening Bell from a Distant Temple. Vol. v.

HUI TSUNG (Kiso Kotei). Pair of Landscapes. Vol. ii.

CHANG CHUNG-MU. Willows and White Herons. Vol. ii.

### *Paintings reproduced in the "Kokka."*

LI LUNG-MIEN. Arhats. Nos. 30, 41.

MA YÜAN. Sage gazing at the Moon. No. 160.

„ Priest and Devotee. No. 123.

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- HSIA KUEI. Landscape. No. 34.  
,, Buffalo swimming a River. No. 165.  
,, Landscape with Boat by a Lake Shore. No. 158.  
CHAO TA-NIEN. Wintry Landscape. No. 41.  
MA LIN (Barin). Angler on Wintry River. No. 162.  
,, Moon and Waves. No. 25.  
LI TI (Riteki). Rose Mallow. No. 95.  
,, Rose Mallow (white and red). Nos. 26 and 134.  
,, Huntsmen returning. Nos. 71, 180.  
,, Apple-branch. No. 144.  
LOU KUAN (Rokan). Rose Mallow reflected in Water.  
No. 84.  
MAO I (Moyeki). Cats and Hollyhocks. No. 69.  
LI AN-CHUNG (Rianchiu). Quails. No. 54.  
,, ,, Hawk and Pheasant. No. 36.

## CHAPTER X. THE MONGOL DYNASTY

### *Chinese Paintings in the British Museum.*

- YEN HUI (Ganki). Three Rishi in a Mountain Haunt.  
Appendix, No. 6.  
YEN HUI. The Rishi Li T'ieh Kwai. Appendix, No. 7.  
School of YEN HUI. Rishi walking on the Waves. Appendix, No. 58.  
CHAO MENG-FU (Chosugo), after WANG WEI. Views of the  
Huang Chuan. Appendix, No. 260.  
CHAO TAN-LIN (Chotanrin). Tiger and Cubs. Appendix,  
No. 11. Doubtful.  
CHAO CHUNG-MU (Cho-chimboku). A Sage. Appendix,  
No. 12.

## NOTES

### *Paintings reproduced in the "Kokka."*

CHIEN HSUAN (Shunkio). Portrait of the Emperor Huan-yeh. No. 66.

CH'IEN SHUN-CHÜ (Sen Shunkio). Rats and Melon. No. 169.

„ „ Melons and Locusts. No. 73.

YEN HUI (Ganki). Moon and Waves. No. 164.

YEN YEÜH-SHAN (Gessan). Sages at Ease. Nos. 53, 67.

### *Tibetan Paintings in the British Museum.*

Of these there is now a fairly representative collection.

## CHAPTER XI. THE ASHIKAGA PERIOD IN JAPAN.

### *Paintings in the British Museum.—Chinese School.*

CHO DENSU (1352-1431). Arhat and Lion. No. 3.

SHIUBUN (fifteenth century). Landscape. No. 601. Attributed to Shiubun ; but the style is not like that of the few known paintings of that master, the brushwork being forcible rather than mild. It seems to be more in the style of Keishoki, but in any case is a fine example of Ashikaga landscape.

KANTEI (fifteenth century). Pair of Chinese Landscapes. Nos. 1135 and 1136.

SOGA JASÖKU (fifteenth century). Landscape roll. No. 862.

SOAMI (fifteenth century). Landscape. No. 602.

After SOTAN (fifteenth century). Hawk and Quail. No. 1259. Wrongly ascribed to Motonobu by Anderson. The original is published by Tajima, "Select Relics."

### *Sesshiu School.*

SESSHU (1420-1506). Hotei and Children. No. 1204.

„ Chinese Landscape. No. 1205.

„ Autumn ; a screen painting. No. 1228.

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SESSON (sixteenth century). Landscape roll. No. 863. Described as anonymous by Anderson.

SESSON. Wild Geese. Nos. 1253 and 1254. Attributed by Anderson to Motonobu.

SHIUGETSU (fifteenth century). The Indian Saint Vimalakirti, No. 1207. Painted in colours in the style of the early Ming masters of China.

SHIUGETSU. Monjiu. No. 1209.

## *Kano School.*

MASANOBU (1453-1490). Chinese Landscape. No. 1251.

MOTONOBU (1476-1559). Shoriken crossing the Sea on a Sword. No. 1252.

MOTONOBU. Set of three: Stork, Birds, and Mallows. Nos. 1256-1258.

After MOTONOBU. The Story of Raiko and the Shiuten Doji. Nos. 383-416. Wrongly catalogued by Anderson as anonymous Tosa school. Cf. another copy, No. 1606.

UTANOSUKE (d. 1575). Bird on Flowering Tree. No. 1266.

SHOYEI (1519-1592). Birds and Bamboos. No. 1269.

From among a mass of paintings of the Ashikaga period reproduced in the *Kokka* and in Tajima's "Select Relics" I append a few selected works of special interest and importance. The "Masterpieces of Motonobu" have been published separately in two volumes by S. Tajima (Tokio, 1904).

CHO DENSU. Arhats. "Select Relics," vol. i.

„ „ Kwannon. *Kokka*, No. 138.

SHIUBUN. Landscape. *Kokka*, No. 145.

„ Pair of Screens. "Select Relics," vol. vii.

SOAMI. Landscapes on sliding panels. "Select Relics," vol. v.

SOGA JASŌKU. Sakyamuni. "Select Relics," vol. v.

„ „ Buddhist Saints. *Kokka*, Nos. 43, 77, 136.

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SESSHU. Jurojin. *Kokka*, No. 111.

„ Landscapes of the Four Seasons. "Select Relics,"  
vol. ix. and vol. x.

KEISHOKI. Monjiu emerging from the Sea. *Kokka*,  
No. 84.

MASANOBU. The Chinese Sage on the Lotus Pond. *Kokka*,  
No. 125.

MASANOBU. Landscapes. *Kokka*, Nos. 38 and 56.

## CHAPTER XII. THE MING PERIOD IN CHINA

### *Paintings in the British Museum.*

LIN LIANG (Rinrio). Wild Geese, Lotus, and Millet. Appendix,  
Nos. 26 and 27.

LIN LIANG. Eagles. Appendix, Nos. 9 and 10. Ascribed  
to Muh Ki by Anderson, but probably by the Ming  
master.

Anonymous, fifteenth century. White Eagle on Perch.  
Appendix, No. 2. Ascribed by Anderson to the Sung  
Emperor, Hui Tsung, but certainly of later date.

Anonymous, fifteenth century. Angler under a Willow.  
Appendix, No. 242. Acquired since the Anderson  
Catalogue.

CH'ÊN CHUNG-FU. Sage and Attendant. Appendix, No. 13.

CHANG CHI. Portrait of a Lady. Appendix, No. 14.

CHU CHI-MIEN. Quails, Bamboo, and Convolvulus. Appendix,  
No. 18.

WAN CHIN. Crow and Loquat. Appendix, No. 21.

LÜ CHI (Rioki). Birds and Flowering Trees. Appendix, Nos.  
29 and 30.

LÜ CHI. Kite and Pine. Appendix, No. 32.

CHIANG PÊH-CHUN. Insects and Flowers. Appendix, Nos. 35  
and 36.

WANG LIEH-PÊN (Oriuhon). Landscape. Appendix, No. 24.

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HSI CHIN KÜ-TSZE. Philosopher and Attendants. Appendix, No. 37. A large painting, notable for the beauty of its light-toned colour and the delicate realism of portraiture.

T'ANG YIN. Lady and Children. Appendix, No. 89.

„ „ Album of Eight Rishi. Appendix, No. 277.  
Acquired since the Anderson Catalogue.

CH'IU YING. Occupations of Court Ladies. Appendix, No. 261.

„ „ Palace and Garden Scenes. Appendix, No. 262.

„ „ Lady at her Window, and Moonlit Landscape.  
In an album. Appendix, No. 278 (9).

The above three were acquired since the Anderson Catalogue.

LIU TSUN. The Hundred Children. Appendix, No. 96.

Tzŭ CHUNG. Pedlar and Children. Appendix, No. 90.

## CHAPTER XIII. THE KANO SCHOOL IN THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

### *Paintings in the British Museum.*

YEITOKU (1543-1590). Mao Nü. No. 1271.

SANRAKU (1573-1635). The Eight Immortals. Nos. 1616  
and 1617. Acquired since the Anderson Catalogue.

SANRAKU. Landscape. No. 1272.

„ Legends of Filial Piety. Nos. 964-996.

SANSETSU (1589-1651). Landscape: Rain. No. 1274.

TANYU (1602-1674). Landscape. No. 1278.

„ Kwannon. No. 1287.

„ „ No. 1291.

„ Landscape Sketch. No. 1286.

MORIKAGE (seventeenth century). A Priest. No. 1581.  
Acquired since the Anderson Catalogue.



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NAONOBU (1607-1680). Bird hovering over a Pine Tree.  
No. 1267.

YASUNOBU (1613-1685). Landscape Screen. No. 1573.

TSUNENOBU (1636-1713). Sages on a Moonlit Lake. No.  
1315.

TSUNENOBU. Kwannon. No. 1304.

ITCHO (1652-1724). Ebisu. No. 1721.

## CHAPTER XIV. MATABEI AND THE BEGINNINGS OF GENRE

The British Museum unfortunately possesses no certain work of Matabei. One painting, of the poetess Komachi, is attributed to him, No. 205.

The work of Matabei and his precursors is fully dealt with and sumptuously illustrated in "Masterpieces of the Ukiyoyé School," by S. Tajima, vol. i. (Tokio, 1906).

See the articles on "Painters of Japan," by Arthur Morrison, *Monthly Review*, 1902; also "An Outline of the History of Ukiyoyé," by E. F. Fenollosa (Tokio, 1901).

## CHAPTER XV. THE GREAT DECORATORS

*Japanese Paintings in the British Museum.*

MITSUOKI (1617-1691). Quails. No. 496. Acquired since the Anderson Catalogue.

SUMIYOSHI JOKEI (1631-1705). Set of three: Fukurokujiu, Birds, and Waterfall. Nos. 201-3.

Attributed to SUMIYOSHI JOKEI. Portrait of Michizane. No. 258. Catalogued as anonymous by Anderson.

SOTATSU (seventeenth century). Manzai Dancers. No. 495. Acquired since the Anderson Catalogue. An unusual example, in delicate pale colour, with many traces of Tosa style.

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KORIN (1661-1716). Narihira fording the Tamagawa. No. 2102.

WATANABE SHIKO (d. 1755). White Peony. No. 2198.  
Acquired since the Anderson Catalogue. Formerly ascribed to Korin.

The Museum is decidedly poor in representative works of the Sotatsu-Korin school. For Sotatsu see Tajima, "Select Relics," vol. v. (Clothes-horses with Brocaded Dresses); vol. x. (Deer, with writing by Koyetsu); vol. xi. (Lotus and Waterfowl, in monochrome); the *Kokka*, No. 33 (Chrysanthemum); No. 14 (Hanshan and Shihté).

For Korin and his school see "Masterpieces of the Korin School," by S. Tajima (Tokio, 2 vols., 1903-4), and "Choice Masterpieces of Korin and Kenzan" (1 vol., the *Kokka* Co., Tokio).

## CHAPTER XVI. NEW MOVEMENTS IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

### *Paintings in the British Museum.*

#### *Chinese.*

CH'ËN NAN-P'ING (Chinnanpin). Birds and Flowers. Appendix, No. 45.

LING YÜN (Rioun). Birds and Flowers. Appendix, No. 49.

Masterpieces of the Southern School, both Chinese and Japanese, have been published by S. Tajima, but with Japanese text only.

#### *Japanese.*

TAIGADO. Chrysanthemum and Peony. No. 812.

YIUHI. Si Wang Mu and Mao Nü. No. 778. A fine example of Japanese work in the later Ming style.

Of Riurikio the Museum possesses no genuine specimen. It has nothing of Buson or of Goshun; and, still greater misfortune,

## NOTES

it has only copies and imitations of paintings by Okio. Jakuchiu is entirely unrepresented. See "Masterpieces by Jakuchiu," published by S. Tajima (Osaka, 1904).

GANKU (1745-1834). Tiger. No. 2702.

SOGA SHOHAKU (eighteenth century). Four Sages. Nos. 1680 and 1681. Acquired since the Anderson Catalogue.

### *Korin School.*

WATANABE SHIKO. See notes on Chapter XV.

HOITSU (1761-1828). Crow and Persimmon. No. 2103.

HONI (pupil of Hoitsu). Mandarin Ducks. No. 2107.

### *Shijo School.*

SOSEN (1747-1821). Monkey. No. 2280.

„ Deer. No. 2286.

HOYEN. Grasshopper Procession. No. 2264.

„ Animals. No. 2651. Acquired since the Anderson Catalogue.

KEIBUN (1779-1844). Mallards flying by Moonlight. No. 2268.

IPPO (early nineteenth century). Peacock. No. 2273.

„ Landscapes. Nos. 2272 and 2272A.

### *Buncho (Neo-Chinese) School.*

BUNCHO (1763-1840). A Chinese Emperor and Two Attendants. No. 822. Copied from a master of the Yüan dynasty.

BUNCHO. Landscape. No. 830.

„ Buntings and Millet. No. 836.

BUNITSU (1788-1819). Fowls. Nos. 2105 and 2106. Wrongly catalogued by Anderson as the work of Hoitsu.

WATANABE KWAZAN (1793-1841). Monkey and Young. No. 673.

CHINZAN (1801-1854). Peony. No. 622.

## NOTES

- YOSAI (1788-1878). Fukurokujiu ascending to Paradise.  
No. 2346.  
ZESHIN (1817-1891). Sketches from Life. Nos. 2364 and  
2365.  
KIOSAI (1831-1889). Humorous Sketches. Nos. 1847-1894.

## CHAPTER XVII. UKIYOYÉ AND THE COLOUR- PRINT

### *Paintings in the British Museum.*

- MORONOBU. Wakashi Bagnio. No. 1710.  
CHOSHUN. A Courtesan. No. 2042. Acquired since the  
Anderson Catalogue.  
MOROMASA. Courtesan and Attendant. No. 2043. Acquired  
since the Anderson Catalogue.  
MOROSHIGE. River Festival at Nagoya ; pair of screens.  
Nos. 1717 and 1718.  
YEISHI. Cocks fighting. In Kano style. No. 1403.  
" Girls shaving the Head of Fukurokujiu. No. 2045.  
Acquired since the Anderson Catalogue.  
HOKUSAI. Demons trying the Bow of Tametomo. No. 1747.  
" Bird. No. 1899.  
" Five Sketches. Nos. 1772-76.  
HOKUBA. The Gods of Good Fortune. No. 1762.  
HIROSHIGE. Tora and Soga no Goro. No. 1756.

It is hardly necessary to mention such well-known works on the colour-prints and masters of Ukiyoyé as those of von Seidlitz, Strange, de Goncourt (Hokusai, Utamaro), Revon (Hokusai), Kurth (Utamaro).

For the history of Ukiyoyé as a school, Mr. Morrison's articles in the *Monthly Review*, and Mr. Fenollosa's "Outline," already cited, should be consulted.



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